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ABSTRACT

This handbook presents course information, reading materials, and application/research projects for a distance education course that provides an introduction to the genre of texts targeted for adolescent/young adult readers. The first section of the handbook discusses the goals, structure, assessment scheme, readings, and resources for the course. The second through fifth sections present four core units on (1) What Is Adolescent/Young Adult Literature?; (2) Adolescent Development; (3) Adolescent/Young Adult Literature and Issues of Diversity; and (4) Issues of Censorship and Privacy. Most of the core units follow a pattern of a unit overview, reading and responding to articles related to unit topic, reading examples of adolescent/young adult literature related to unit topic, and an application/research project (which may include library research, Internet research and activity, developing teaching units, interviewing students, and evaluating teaching effectiveness). (RS)

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ED 399 512

Education L535:
Teaching Adolescent/Young Adult Literature
Course Handbook I

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Indiana University, Bloomington
School of Education
Language Education Department

Sections:

I. Course Overview:
Goals, Structure, Assessment Scheme, Readings and Resources

II. Core Unit 1: What is Adolescent/Young Adult Literature?

III. Core Unit 2: Adolescent Development

IV. Core Unit 3: Adolescent/Young Adult Literature and Issues of Diversity

V. Core Unit 4: Issues of Censorship and Privacy

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L535, Teaching Adolescent/Young Adult Literature

(Language Education Department, School of Education
Indiana University-Bloomington)

Course developed by Larry Mikulecky, Mike Czech and Bonnie Cammeron

This course provides an introduction to the genre of texts targeted for adolescent/young adult readers. Surveying the field, the course highlights and analyzes recent publications as it acknowledges significant, earlier texts and their distinguishing features. The course considers curricular and pedagogical issues salient to the adoption of young adult literature, particularly as teachers attempt to develop reader-centered approaches and multi cultural curricula for teaching and learning in our diverse society.

Course Goals

1. To read and develop a familiarity with a wide range of adolescent/young adult literature from the classic to the current.

2. To become familiar with and examine scholarly work and research on a variety of teaching approaches which employ adolescent/young adult literature.

3. To develop a variety of curricular units which employ adolescent/young adult literacy and approaches studied as part of this course.

4. To perform action research (either as part of a classroom application project or with participating adolescents) related to adolescent/young adult literacy.

5. Students taking this course as part of a Master's degree which emphasizes distance technology will be expected take advantage of assignments and assignment options which draw upon Internet resources.

Course Structure

Course Units: This course is structured around six core units and a selection of four additional units from a menu of genre, topical, thematic, and research units. Most units follow a pattern of:

I. Unit overview
II. Reading and responding to 1-3 articles related to unit topic.
III. Reading examples of Adolescent/Young Adult Literature related to unit topic.
IV. Application/research project (These projects vary and include library research, Internet research and activity, developing teaching units, interviewing students, and evaluating teaching effectiveness.

Participation Activities: In addition to receiving regular written feedback on assignments, it is expected that students will receive and provide feedback during interactions with the instructor and other students through one of more of the following means:

1) conference and individual telephone calls,
2) electronic (e-mail) discussion groups,
3) electronic mail dialogues with the instructor and other students,
4) planned campus visits, and
5) meetings with other students who live in your area.

A plan for doing this will be worked out during initial conversations with your instructor.

Internet Use: There are several resources relatod to Young Adult and Adolescent literature available on the Internet. These range from lists of award winning books to professional journals available on the Internet to collections of resources for teaching adolescent literature. You will be provided with a beginning list of such resources and be expected to draw upon the Internet for several of your assignments. In addition, some students may choose to develop new Internet resources for teaching young adult and adolescent literature. Developing home pages for favorite authors, posting teaching ideas and lessons, and bringing together effective Internet links are all possible assignments.

Turning in Assignments and Grading

If you intend to complete this course in a semester's time, pace yourself so that a new unit is completed and turned in about every 10-14 days. Pace yourself so that you can get feedback between units and can arrange participation and feedback activities. DO NOT TURN IN MORE THAN TWO UNITS TOGETHER. This makes it impossible to provide feedback to help you improve your performance.

Grades will be compiled based upon individual unit performance with 10% of the grade determined by the level and quality of student participation in face-to-face, telephone, and e-mail discussions. Superior performances are usually associated with doing well on the more challenging application/research project options provided with each unit.

Required Core Units (1-6)

1. What is Adolescent/Young Adult Literature (Definitions and a history of classic works)

2. Adolescent Development and Adolescent/Young Adult Literature (How adolescent literature relates to issues of adolescent development)

3. Adolescent/Young Adult Literature and Issues of Diversity (An examination of issues of culture, gender, ethnicity, and social values as they are reflected in adolescent literature)

4. Issues of Censorship and Privacy (How to teach adolescent literature in a manner which recognizes free access to information, respects the differing values of parents and communities, and allows you to keep your job.)

5. The Teaching of Literary Aspects Using Adolescent/Young Adult Literature (Teaching adolescent literature using traditional literary elements such as plot, theme, character, point of view, style, etc.)

6. Alternative Approaches to Teaching Adolescent/Young Adult Literature (Interdisciplinary approaches, thematic and topical approaches, genre approaches, learner-centered approach.)

Selection Units

You must choose 3 Genre/Topical Units

1. Genre/Topical Unit: Mysteries
2. Genre/Topical Unit: Science Fiction/Fantasy
3. Genre/Topical Unit: Romances
4. Genre/Topical Unit: Adventure
5. Genre/Topical Unit: History
6. Genre/Topical Unit: Drama
7. Genre/Topical Unit: Non-fiction
8. Genre/Topical Unit: Poetry and Short Stories

You must choose 1 Research Unit

1. Choose a topic related to adolescent/young adult literature, read 5-10 articles related to this topic, and write a 8-10 page paper with an annotated bibliography. The paper should be directed toward other teachers who want to know what is new in this area. Top papers will be posted on the Internet.

2. Each year articles and papers in the ERIC system and sources on the Internet list several different collections of "year's best" titles for adolescent/young adult literature. Review several of these recommendation lists and compile your own reading list of 10-15 titles for a particular topic, theme, or genre. For each book, provide:

   A) a brief 100-150 word description designed to help an adolescent decide if he or she should read the book, and

   B) a paragraph or two for other teachers with advice about using the book.

3. Many pieces of adolescent literature have also been presented in video format. Using the ERIC system, the Internet, and product catalogues, find at least 10 video connections with adolescent literature and view them. For each produce a one page review which includes:

   1) Sufficient information for another teacher to find, purchase or rent the video.
   2) A brief review of the video's strengths and weaknesses, and
   3) Suggestions and warnings to teachers who want to use this video.

4. In coordination with the instructor of the course, develop a World Wide Web page for some aspect of adolescent/young adult literature or develop features which can be added to the Web page for this course.

Beginning Internet Resources for

Young Adult Literarture

YOUNG ADULT LIBRARIAN'S HELP/HOMEPAGE

Starting Points - This page includes links and documents concerning young adults and young adult literature. It also contains links to public libraries with YA homepages and school library links.

Reading Pages - This page includes links and documents concerning young adult reading, young adult publishing and various lists/bibliographies.

Professional Pages - This page includes links and documents concerning professional issues and associations, adolescent behavior/welfare, and education

Teen Pages- This page includes links and documents aimed at teenagers, from general pages for/about/by teens, to specific sections of teen special interests and online teen magazines/e-zines.

Ending Points - This page includes "points to remember" about serving young adults in libraries, links to presentation handouts/outlines and information about the author of this homepage.

http://www.acpl.lib.in.us/young_adult_lib_ass/yaweb.html#toc

The Alan Review

(Winter 1994 to the present)
ALAN: Assembly on Literature for Adolescents Childrens' Literature Web
http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/alan-review.htm

The Internet Book Fair

A home for publishers' Web pages, with a Publishers Index, Booksellers Index, and more.

Reading lists and bibliographies from Bookport, WritePage, and Malaspina University-College
    Bestseller lists, from Publishers Weekly
    What's new in books, from the Internet Book Information Center
    Book review Web sites
Publishers' WWW Pages
    Search for any publisher on the Web, by name or topic
    Web pages hosted by BookZone
    Web pages hosted by the Internet Book Fair
    Web pages hosted by www.ReadersNdex.com

http://www.bookport.com/b_welcomehome.html

Digital Librarian
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Aleph-Bet Books -- Dealer in rare and collectible children's books
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland -- Project Gutenberg
Anne of Green Gables Encyclopedia Page -- Thomas P. Grelinger
Betsy-Tacy Homepage
Books for Children and More: an Editor's Site -- Harold Underdown
Brian Jacques -- Unofficial homepage of the author of the Redwall Series
Booklist -- American Library Association journal of book reviews
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books
Canadian Children's Book Centre
Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site
Childlit Finder -- East Coast Internet Companion
Children's Book Council
Children's Literature: a Newsletter for Adults
Children's Literature Web Guide -- David K. Brown; University of Calgary
Compleat Bellairs
Cyber-Seuss
Edward Lear
Electronic Children's Books Index -- BookWire
Electronic Resources for Youth Services -- Argus/Clearinghouse
Fairosa's Library of Children's Literature
Goosebumps -- Scholastic
HarperCollins Children's Books
Into the Wardrobe: The C. S. Lewis WWW Page
J.R.R. Tolkien Information Page
Justin G. Schiller -- Dealer in rare children's books
Kay Vandergrift's Children's Literature Page
Kindred Spirits -- Lucy Maud Montgomery
Lewis Carroll Home Page Illustrated -- William Maury Morris
My Little House on the Prarie Home Page -- Jennifer Slegg
Native American Books -- Paula Giese's list of children's books
Newbery Classroom Home -- M. Joseph
Notable Children's Book -- American Library Association
Notable Children's Books -- 1996 - Social Studies; NCSS
Ozcot Home Page
Page at Pooh Corner
Pop Up World of Ann Montanaro -- Exhibition of pop up books at Rutgers
Reading Rainbow
Scholastic Network
Story Resources available on the Web
Storytelling Home Page -- Tejas Storytelling Association
Tales of Wonder -- Folk and Fairy Tales; compiled by Richard Darsie
Tribute to a Master: John Bellairs
Welcome to Seussville! -- Random House
YALSA Annual Lists -- Young Adult Library Services Association

http://www.servtech.com/public/mvail/childlit.html

The Internet Public Library
Take a look at WebINK: Internet Newsletter for Kids Our new print and web publication for children.

From this page you can go to the following divisions of the library:
- Reference
- Youth
- Teen
- MOO

About the Library

...or to the following rooms:
- Classroom
- Exhibit Hall
- Reading Room

...or use a service:
- Directory and Tour
- Web Searching
- Services for Librarians

http://ipl.sils.umich.edu/index.text.html

Some additional useful World Wide Web pages are:

Children's Literature Web Guide
http://www.ucalgary.ca/\~dkbrown/storcoll.html

Using Literature and Technology to Relieve Adolescent Problems
http://www.ucet.ufl.edu/ACE/hurwitz.html

Welcome to the Scholastic Network
http://www.scholastic.com/public/Network/Network-Home.html

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English)
http://www.ncte.org

Multicultural Book Reviews for K-12
http://www.iso.com/homes/jmele/joe.html#afanch

Unit 1
What is Adolescent/Young Adult Literature

There is some disagreement about what, exactly, is meant by adolescent/young adult literature. This is apparent, even in the clumsiness of the title of this course. Over the years several terms have been used to describe this genre of literature. Among them are: *literature for adolescence, adolescent literature, adolescent fiction, junior teen novels,* and *juvenile fiction*. Because of the pejorative nature of some of these terms, in recent years the term *young adult literature* has come to be used for literature written for or about young adults. Terms like *adolescent literature* have been found to be inadequate since some of the literature discussed within the field was appropriate for twelve-year-olds and yet not really children's literature. Other material deals clearly with topics and themes targeted at young adults in their early twenties (who are beyond adolescence), and yet the literature seems somehow separate from the field of general literature.

There are disagreements about what literature must do to qualify as part of this somewhat vague field. For example, should the topic and themes be directly related to the challenges and problems of young adults (i.e. emerging independent identity, dealing with peers and parents, newly developing physical and social adulthood, etc.)? Must major characters be adolescents? Is it sufficient for the literature to simply be of interest to adolescents and young adults? For example, Jurassic Park and other novels by Michael Crichton have been at the top of student interest lists in recent years.

As a result of these sorts of disagreements, definitions of the field have tended to be very broad. For example, Carlsen (1980, p. 1) suggests the simple definition of "literature which adolescents read." Nilsen and Donelson (1993, preface) offer an equally broad definition of, "any book freely chosen for reading by someone in this age group, which means that we do not make a distinction between books distributed by juvenile division and adult divisions of publishing houses." Reed (1994, p. 4) goes on to suggest that the "common characteristics of books selected by young adults are simplicity, characters who are young or experience situations of the young, and modern themes that relate to the life of today's young adults."

Within these definitions, it is possible to include such classic titles as *Little Women, Treasure Island, Romeo and Juliet, Huckleberry Finn* and *Red Badge of Courage*. Reed (1994, 467-473) lists classics of young adult literature. Some sample titles of the past half century, listed by decade, follow below.

1940's

Seventeenth Summer by Maureen Daly

Johnny Tremain by Esther Forbes

Going on Sixteen by Betty Cavanna

1950's

Thunder Road by William Gault

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank

I Am Fifteen and I Do Not Want to Die by Christine Arnothy

1960's

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

A Separate Peach by John Knowles

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden by Hannah Green

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones by Ann Head

The Contender by Robert Lipsyte

The Pigman by Paul Zindel

1970's

Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret by Judy Blume

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

Go Ask Alice by Anonymous

A Day No Pigs Would Die by Robert Peck

Julie of the Wolves by Jean Craighead George

A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich by Alice Childress

The Chocolate War by Robert Cromier

The Cat Ate My Gymsuit by Paula Danziger

1980's

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin

The Language of Goldfish by Zibby Oneal

Jacob Have I Loved by Katherine Paterson

A Visit to William Blake's Inn by Nancy Willard

The Moves Make the Man by Bruce Brooks

Acts of Love by Maureen Daly

1990's

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli

Scorpions by Walter Dean Meyers

A Band of Angels by Julian Thompson

The Drowning of Stephan Jones by Bette Greene

There are several reasons for teachers to use young adult literature as part of their teaching regime. Motivation is one of the more persuasive of these reasons. Having students read materials they are likely to want to read and enjoy goes a long way toward helping students to develop into life-long readers who will choose to read on their own. A second reason is to use the vicarious experience provided by good literature to help adolescents negotiate the challenges of being an adolescent. A third reason to use adolescent literature is as a means for helping young adults prepare for the diversity in cultures, beliefs, and life-styles they are very likely to encounter once they leave the relatively sheltered environments which many adolescents inhabit.

Reading Selections Accompanying This Unit

There are three reading selections which accompany this unit. Each is intended to provide a perspective on the history and development of young adult literature as well as the uses to which it has been put. As you read these articles, consider examples of young adult literature with which you are familiar and how these pieces support or contradict the assertions made by the article authors.

The first article is "Teaching literature for the adolescent: A historical perspective" by Robert Carlsen. Carlsen shares his recollections of the field of adolescent literature from the middle 1940's through the middle 1980's. This article charts changes in the field, discusses what makes an adolescent novel, and questions whether this sort of writing is really literature or needs to be.

The second article is "Adolescent literature: A transition into future reading" by Susan Nugent. Nugent presents a common argument raised against adolescent literature (i.e. that it should not be used in schools because it keeps students away from "real" literature). The remainder of the article counters this argument by suggesting ways that adolescent literature can be used to increase appreciation of all literature and as a transition to more complex forms of writing.

The third article is "Molding the minds of the young: The history of bibliotherapy as applied to children and adolescents" by Lauren Myracle. Myracle traces the ways young adult literature has been used throughout history to shape thoughts and help youngsters deal with life. These ways range from presenting models of self-sufficiency like *The Hardy Boys*, and *Nancy Drew* to more recent work designed to help young adults with such topics as teenage pregnancy, abortion, alcoholism, divorce, suicide, homosexuality, and AIDS.

Suggested Additional References

Bushman, J. & Bushman K. (1993). *Using young adult literature in the English* *classroom*. New York: Merrill Publishing.

Donelson, K. & Nilsen, A. P. (1993) *Literature for today's young adults*. New York: Harper Collins.

Kaywell, J. F. (Ed).. (1993). *Adolescent literature as a complement to the classics, Vol I.*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon, Publishers.

Kaywell, J. F. (Ed).. (1995). *Adolescent literature as a complement to the classics, Vol II.*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon, Publishers.

Reed, A. (1994). *Reaching adolescents*. New York: Merrill Publishing.

Assignment Options

1. From the lists of young adult literature provided in this overview and the articles, select 2-3 novels (each a decade apart from the others). In a 3-5 page paper, compare and contrast the novel's treatment of adolescent challenges and models. Be sure to comment upon your judgements on the effectiveness of using older pieces with current adolescents.

2. Nugent suggests that adolescent literature can be used as a bridge of sorts to the appreciation of other literature. From the lists of young adult literature provided in this overview and the articles, select 2-3 novels (each a decade apart from the others). In a 3-5 page paper, discuss the degree to which you agree or disagree with Nugent's assertions. Support your statements with plenty of examples from the novels you've read for this assignment.

3. Myracle's article suggests young adult literature has always been used in an attempt to shape the minds of young people. From the lists of young adult literature provided in this overview and the articles, select 2-3 novels (each a decade apart from the others). In a 3-5 page paper discuss what you think each of the novels you've read is attempting to do in shaping the minds of young adults. Provide examples from the novels to support your assertions. Comment upon any patterns or changes you note as you examine novels from different decades.

Teaching Literature for the Adolescent: A Historical Perspective

G. Robert Carlsen

Sometime in the 1930s that magnificent woman, Dora V. Smith, a professor at the University of Minnesota, separated adolescent literature from children's literature which she then taught. She set up the first classes for this new subject and in 1939, as a reluctant, jobless English major, I took the course. It was for me a Damascus road experience which made me look at literature in a whole new way. I freely admit that part of the conversion emanated from the sheer glow of Dora V's personality. But it was more than that. She looked at literature as a transaction taking place between the work and the reader so that the reader was every bit as important as the work. Louise Rosenblatt had just written the first edition of *Literature as Explanation* echoing the philosophy that Dora V was presenting in a more concrete form. It is interesting that the course came thirty or so years before phenomenological criticism and the discovery of the implied reader.

Dora V's course was centered on the implied readers though she didn't call them that. She called them the *boys and girls*, never teenagers and never adolescents.

About 1945 when I was a graduate student, Dora V called one fall and told me that I was to teach her course the following summer. Panic. So I went back to her class that spring. I wanted to teach it as much as possible the way she did and now I was looking at the class as an outsider instead of as a student. One of the things that suprised me was that she spent almost 50% of class time on class routines: making assignments, commenting on assignments, passing out booklists, etc. But three important aspects of her teaching became apparent.

The first distinctive feature of her method was the pattern of presentation. She began by examining sub-literature (She called it trash): the comics, juvenile series books, sentimental romances, and adventure stories. Then she moved on to teenage books, including animal stories. Next came adult books that teenagers might read. (This list was called "Novels for Evaluation.") Finally there were discussions of books of poetry and biography. She did not consider drama or nonfiction. Her pattern was the one I used through my teaching of the course in Colorado, Texas, and Iowa.

The second aspect of her method was her use of extensive reading. Dora V gave thumb nail sketches of hundreds of books, commenting on their relationship to similar books, gossiping about the authors, pointing out the human significance, and most of all discussing what kind of teenager would be the reader. We were to read widely, not necessarily any set titles, but what sounded interesting to us. Here I was introduced to the card system of recording each title and a few comments on one's reading. So I too always made my courses extensive reading experiences in which I asked students to read at least 50 books. I later discovered that other courses on adolescents' reading were organized on different patterns. The one at the University of Wisconsin asked students to read those books they were most likely to teach: *Julius Caesar, Silas Marner, The Ancient Mariner, Huckleberry Finn*, and perhaps *Ethan Frome*. While I taught extensively, I always recommend to graduate students who were having their first shot at teaching the class, people like Ken Donelson, Alleen Nilsen, Bruce Appleby, Ben Nelms, Dick Abrahamson, and more recently Liz

Belden and Ann Sherrill—that they tie the course to half a dozen recently popular works which the class read in common. Thereby they could bypass the necessity of having to know a multitude of books well.

The third distinctive aspect of Dora V's teaching was her concept of reading ladders. In her classes we constructed ladders placing titles on the rungs according to our judgment of quality. If we were dealing with "love stories," we placed Jane Eyre at the top and Candy Cane at the bottom. A half step up was Amelia Walden. A full step up was Ann Emery. Another step up, Maureen Daly and above her the early novels of Madeline L'Engle (*The Small Rain*). Then came Betty Smith and perhaps Bess Streeter Aldrich. Through reading guidance a teacher was to move readers from one level to a higher one. I had trouble from the beginning with this concept, for it seemed to me that we were using different criteria to judge the books in a category and yet trying to put them on the same ladder. Consider, for instance, the ladder of love stories. Was this a ladder of developmental stages from puppy love to mature or was it a ladder of psychological insights from superficial to profound? Or was it a ladder of literary sophistication from pot boilers to works of art?

Still, from my teaching of that first class I continued to follow Dora V's method of teaching Literature for the Adolescent. I used the same pattern—from trash to serious literature; an extensive reading and discussion of titles; and reading ladders.

By the 1960s, I had formalized a number of different approaches for judging books for teenage readers. I started from the point of view of the reading interests of young people, setting up a model from late childhood through late adolescence, as children moved from animal stories and school stories to stories of the search for self and a philosophy of living. We asked ourselves about the content, the theme of a book, where, if anywhere, it would be placed in terms of teenagers' interests.

Next I applied Robert Havighurst's concept of developmental task to adolescent books. It seemed to me that the most popular and successful titles, like Daly's *Seventeenth Summer*, were books in which characters were dealing with one or more of the developmental tasks. So we looked not only at the story content, but also at the conflicts and turmoils besetting the characters.

A third approach was examining the truth or falsity of the assumptions that a book either stated or implied about human life and society. We used sub-literature to highlight the absurdities of the implications in a book. Questionable assumptions that some teenage books make even today are that teens are more competent than adults; that one should struggle to be in a group no matter what the members stand for; and that close friendships between individuals of the same sex indicate a homosexual relationship. The assumptions reflected in books change from generation to generation as they follow the changing folk beliefs of people. Though a few may continue from one period to the next, many will vary. The one thing you can count on is that there will always be, in some books, questionable assumptions.

Later we looked for archetypal patterns in teenage books. Two seemed particularly germaine—the search for self, often through an alter ego as in *Demian* or *A Separate Peace*. Most teenage romances seem to be this kind of story—a ying and yang relationship, not a sexual one at all, but one in which a person uses a member of the opposite sex to find self. How else account for the upper class girl attracted to the lower class boy, the intellectual girl and the jock? The second prevalent archetype is that of the rites of passage including separation, wandering, and finally incorporation. Many teenage books fail because they are only of separation or of wandering but lead to no incorporation. They are as incomplete as adolescence itself is incomplete. I am often more satisfied with the pattern of the animal story than of a Norma Klein story. It was with great relief at the end of my teaching to get a book like *Beauty* by Robin McKinley (Harper, 1978) with its frankly archetypal pattern giving a totally satisfying story pattern.

That leads to my last concern—one that I never solved to my satisfaction during my teaching years—looking at teenage books as literature. Since I have retired I have been rereading Jane Austen and Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Brontes and I realize how far short of the mark teenage books tend to be. A devastating comparison can be seen by reading Austen's *Northanger Abbey* with its seventeen-year-old heroine and a Judy Blume book.

The things we often talk about as *literature* in our evaluating of teenage books fall short of the mark—such things as rounded characters, chronological or inverted plots, setting, or theme do not explain the essence of the books we revere as *literature.* It has seemed to me lately that the real difference lies in the complexity and subtlety of the plot pattern, in the way the readers' reactions are led in an engrossing pattern that has a satisfying unity. But most important of all is that elusive thing we call style. Part of style lies in the richness of imagery so that we see, hear, feel, smell, taste what the characters are experiencing. And part of style is that flow of language that raises the work from the transactional or expressive dimension to the poetic. The best that can be said for most teenage books is that they are good journalistic writing. A few that I would mention as something better in quality are Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer*, John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*, perhaps Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, Robin McKinley's *Beauty* and Felice Holman's *Slake's Limbo.*

In those golden days of twenty-five years ago I had one tremendous advantage: Books had a life expectancy of twenty to thirty years. Aldrich's *A Lantern in Her Hand*, a great teenage favorite which was published in the early twenties, was still available until the late 1970s. This was true of the great body of books. So I could talk about books current at the time and send students out with knowledge of a core of books that would be useful to them for a fair span of years. A principal objective of my course could be the sheer knowledge of teenage books. Now titles seem evanescent. After two years of retirement, I would have a problem teaching a course in literature for the adolescent. Recently Alleen Nilsen sent me an article in which she mentioned some twenty titles. There were only three that I recognized. This transitoriness of teenage books has perhaps come about for three reasons.

1. Publishers, because of recent IRS restrictions can no longer afford to keep "remainders" on their shelves.
2. Our culture now moves at such a frenetic pace that last year's book has no relevance for this year's reader. John Tunis for twenty years could write about the Brooklyn Dodgers. They were as permanent an institution in New York as was the state capitol in Albany. Teenage books took place in a more stable world—one in which common values seemed accepted. The so-called sexual revolution had not taken place. Women's liberation was still only a dream. The civil rights movement was just boiling up. Drugs were a minor problem. The population explosion was just beginning. Disillusionment with government spawned by Viet Nam had not set in. Computers had not taken over control of our lives. Books written in those far off days seem quaintly old fashioned and new books can hardly outlive a single season.
3. A possible third reason for the failure of books to live on could be that today's books are not as good as those of the past. Florence Means seems to me a better, more sensitive writer than M. E. Kerr. No one today can touch John Tunis in writing a sports story. The early Mary Stolz seems far richer than Norma Klein. There is no Kjelgaard turning out animal stories and no Howard Pease writing one thrilling adventure after another.

If I were teaching literature for adolescents today, I would put more emphasis on the history of the field and insist on a fair amount of reading of books like *Wuthering Heights, Little Women, Treasure Island, Young Fu, Otto of the Silver Hand, Call it Courage, Shuttered Windows, All-American, T Model Tommy, Big Red, The Jinx Ship, The Catcher in the Rye, A Separate Peace, Seventeenth Summer*, and *Summer of My German Soldier.*

I would emphasize techniques for speed reading and skimming and sources of information *about* teenage books. And finally and most importantly, I would try to teach the criteria for judging a teenage book.

As a result, I should probably be accused by my students of talking in generalities and not keeping up with titles. But with the rapid demise of each year's crop of books, it seems hardly worth the effort to "keep up."

As I look back now, I realize that the field of literature for the adolescent is still in its adolescence. Like adolescents, this subject must undergo the rites of passage. Dora V. Smith separated it from Children's Literature. For many years it has been wandering trying to define itself. Perhaps you will be privileged to see that final rewarding stage—its incorporation into the family of literature as a recognized literary genre.

G. Robert Carlsen retired in 1982 from the University of Iowa.

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Adolescent Literature: A Transition into a Future of Reading

Susan Monroe Nugent

Does adolescent literature have a place in the classroom? Should we spend valuable class time discussing this literature? As a colleague asked, "Isn't it our job to raise the standards of our students?" At all teaching levels, these questions lead to worthwhile, though often heated, discussions of literature and also of teaching literature. If we examine our classroom goals, we need not be caught in a dichotomy. Instead, we will see that adolescent literature can become a transition providing literary concepts as well a broadening experiences requisite to reading more mature literature.

Adolescent literature bridges the gap between children's literature and adult literature. No one expects the reader of *Little House on the Prairie* to plunge into *Little Big Man*. The secrets in *The Secret Garden* do not prepare the reader sufficiently for those in *The Secret Sharer*. As a bridge, adolescent literature keeps students from falling into a river of too difficult vocabulary, too complex syntax, and too demanding concepts. The bridge supplies experiences that increase confidence and develop abilities.

Parents (and teachers) sometimes deny this bridge, stating, "My daughter is a good student, and she never read those books." A few students do race through a period of adolescent literature, often before the parent or teacher thinks about it. Advanced sixth, seventh, and eighth graders may have satisfied their need for adolescent literature before they enter senior high school, but most young adults have not. Others spend little time enjoying adolescent literature before discovering popular literature (e.g., Victoria Holt, Danielle Steele, Stephen King, Irwin Shaw). This adult material has many of the qualities of adolescent literature. Both adolescent and popular literature help prepare students for classical and contemporary mature literature.

Teachers can use these reading experiences when they teach or review literary concepts. Learning difficult concepts (point of view, symbolism, or internal monologue) while reading difficult and often unfamiliar content prematurely places too many demands upon students. Instead, adolescent literature allows students to focus on a new concept, addressing that demand while reading about more familiar content. The point here is that a difficult concept plus difficult content often results in conceptual overload and frustration. On the other hand, teaching that uses a difficult concept with familiar content can lead students to earlier success with the concept.

For example, when teachers wish to teach the concept of setting as an integral part of plot, reflecting the primary conflict of the novel with emotionalized landscaping, they could use Steinbeck's "Flight" or Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. However, both require students to learn concepts (emotionalized landscaping, objective correlative, symbolism) while reading relatively difficult material. Alternative selections might be Patricia McKillip's *The Night Gift*, Robert C. O'Brien's *Z for Zachariah*, or Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. With these novels, students can expend energies learning a concept as well as enjoying reading. Once the concept is understood, teachers can move on to "Flight" or *The Scarlet Letter* asking students to apply an understood concept while reading more difficult material.

Many literary concepts can be introduced making use of adolescent literature, but two will be discussed here. Style is often taught to high school juniors, seniors, and again to college students. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* has long been a successful teaching tool for this concept. I'd like to suggest two other specific titles: Barbara Wersba's *Run Softly, Go Fast* and Maia Wojciechowska's *Don't Play Dead Before You Have To.*

Wersba's novel, written from Davey's internal point of view, examines an adolescent relationship with a father. Like Salinger's novel, it lends itself to a study of language variation. Students can examine how this speaker's voice reflects age, socioeconomic status, interests and values, parents' background, education, and hometown experiences. What I especially like about this book is Davey's slow decentering of self; writing for him becomes self-discovery. While hunting for reasons his father changed and why their relationship soured, he discovers his own values and strengths along with his own weaknesses. The reader's examination of the character ultimately leads to analysis of self. Student journal entries indicate that this book can promote student self-awareness as well.

Maia Wojciechowska's *Don't Play Dead Before You Have To* is far easier reading than Wersba's or Salinger's novels. Yet using this book, the student can address the concept of style in a sophisticated manner. Again, language variation can be studied. This selection is especially appropriate because of its unique point of view, one students enjoy trying to label. Is it a dialogue? A monologue? A mono-dialogue? What? In responding to Byron, the reader becomes Charlemagne or Mr. Humdinger or Lennie. This style is one that younger students can imitate.

Another effective use of adolescent literature is in analyzing literature through various critical approaches. The sociological, archetypal, psychological, formalist, and affective approaches to literature can all be taught through adolescent literature. The archetypal approach to literature can be discussed and applied in reading Hal Borland's *When the Legends Die*. The hero's quest, the circular pattern of the novel, and the archetypal characterizations can be examined before using this approach with more difficult literature. Consequently, adolescent literature can be an effective tool in college preparatory classes and at the college level. This literature should not be restricted to general classes or the junior high school alone but rather used throughout the curriculum.

Closely related is the use of adolescent literature for broadening student experiences. Because the time required to read adolescent literature is relatively short, we can use it as an introduction to various types of literature. Readers can quickly become involved in the experiences of various minorities. *Laughing Boy* by Oliver LaFarge provides awareness of Native American Cultures, *The Learning Tree* by Gordon Parks gives insight into Afro-American experiences, and *Jacob Have I Loved* by Katherine Paterson promotes understanding of women's relationships to society.

For students who have little idea of what life in various historical periods was like, adolescent literature can serve as an introduction. Pre-1776 American can be discovered by reading Elizabeth Speare's *Calico Captive* or *The Witch of Blackbird Pond.* Problems of the Civil War may be better understood by reading Irene Hunt's *Across Five Aprils.* Students who wonder and worry about the draft can see how it affected the 60s in Nat Hentoff's *I'm Really Dragged But Nothing Gets Me Down.*

Broadened experiences through adolescent literature can also be used in introducing students to various types of literature. Adult westerns, mysteries, historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, all these and more have adolescent literature counterparts. Students in my adolescent literature classes moan and groan when I assign a fantasy. However, after meeting Gurgi in Lloyd Alexander's "Prydain Series," their own "moanings and groanings" cease as they are caught up in his "gnashings and thrashings." These students want to continue the series after only one assigned book.

If we believe that a primary value of literature is exploring human experience, then adolescent literature provides us many opportunities. Anyone who reads *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich* by Alice Childress appeciates the complexity of emotions within an individual as well as the pressures of society upon one. Charles P. Crawford's *Three Legged Race* stresses the interdependence of people and the frailty of such relationships. In *The Chosen,* Chaim Potok helps us explore the relationships of fathers and sons. Such reading can lead students to what one of my colleagues has as a primary objective in literature

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classes—to study and understand other people so that we can better understand ourselves.

Most important, adolescent literature provides readers with pleasurable reading experiences. When I was teaching high school seniors a unit loosely designed around parent-child relationships, students knew what books we would cover during the unit. When I opened my book closet to get the copies of *Run Softly, Go Fast*, I panicked, finding only four paperbacks on the shelf. Twenty-four students ignored my predicament as they buried their faces in their copies. These students, having helped themselves to my supply, were already well into the book. This incident, one that other teachers of adolescent literature will recall, illustrates a fact—students want to read these novels.

Providing students with enjoyable reading opportunities helps to create a society of readers. One of my goals in teaching literature is to have students leave the classroom wanting to continue reading and hunting for good books. In addition to increased personal reading, adolescent literature helps students gain confidence, ability, and experience needed to believe they can read more mature literature, in and outside the classroom.

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Language Abuse: A Short Word-Play

Richard K. Redfern

The Scene: A courtroom

The Time: A few years from now

The Characters: A judge; an officer in the State Word Police; the defendant, John Smith

Judge: What's the charge, Officer?

Officer: Your Honor, this man bypassed a dangling participle, failed to stitch up a split infinitive, and left the scene of a mixed metaphor. I have the evidence right here in this letter he wrote to the editor of *The Daily Gazette*.

Judge (after reading the letter): Mr. Smith, how do you plead?

Smith: Guilty, Your Honor. It was late at night when I wrote this letter, and the lights on my typewriter were pretty dim. I went right by that dangling participle without even seeing it. And that split infinitive—I didn't even think of getting out my pencil and eraser to sort of pull it together. You see so many of them hanging around nowadays. As for that mixed metaphor, I know I should have braked to a stop and sent in a simile as a substitute, but I was in a terrible hurry.

Judge: I could give you five days in the slammer for this offense, but I'm going to let you off easy. The sentence is to memorize the first ten pages of Edwin Newman's book *A Civil Tongue*. Report to me a week from today. Any questions?

Smith: I guess not, Your Honor. I would have had my lawyer here, but he's in trouble for some kind of tax evasion—syntax evasion, I think.

Judge: Get out of here!

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ALAN Review Winter 1995

Molding the Minds of the Young: The History of Bibliotherapy as Applied to Children and Adolescents

Lauren Myracle

And shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tale which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we wish them to have when they are grown up? We cannot.... Anything received into the mind at this age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts.... (Plato, 374 B.C., p. 72)

From Plato's time and before, adults have been concerned with molding the minds of the young, and what better way to do so than with books? So the logic goes, at any rate, for as Theodosia Crosse rapturously points out, "Literature is and has been through ages the great medium of thought transference. It is the mighty stronghold wherein are kept the gems of intellect.... In its depths are reflected joy, sorrow, hope, despair -- every emotion that recorded life has known" (Crosse, 1928, p. 925). Adults throughout the ages have viewed books as powerful tools with which to guide children's thinking, strengthen their character, shape their behavior, and, more recently, even to solve their problems. The ways in which books have been employed as a means to produce change in children are multitudinous, and it is both interesting and amusing to trace the history of bibliotherapy as it has been applied to children and adolescents.

Although the powerful effects of reading have been known since ancient times, it was only in the early 1900s that a specific term was coined for the use of books to effect a change in a person's thinking or behavior. In a 1916 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*, Samuel Crothers discussed a technique of prescribing books to patients who need help understanding their problems, and he labeled this technique "bibliotherapy" (Crothers, 1916, p. 291). More concretely, bibliotherapy is defined by Riordan and Wilson as "the guided reading of written materials in gaining understanding or solving problems relevant to a person's therapeutic needs" (Riordan and Wilson, 1989, p. 506). Caroline Shrodes, one of bibliotherapy's staunchest supporters, suggests that bibliotherapy is effective because it allows the reader to identify with a character and realize that he or she is not the only person with a particular problem. As the character works through a problem, the reader is emotionally involved in the struggle and ultimately achieves insight about his or her own situation (Shrodes, 1955, p. 24).

The application of bibliotherapy was initially limited to hospitals, where it was used as an adjunct to the library services provided to World War I veterans. By 1940 its use had spread to a variety of settings, and in 1946 bibliotherapy was applied for the first time with children (Agnes, 1946, pp. 8-16). Before focusing on this usage, however, there is a related topic that should be mentioned: the history of young adult literature. Since books from this genre are typically employed when bibliotherapy is applied to children and adolescents, it is worthwhile to trace the genre's major changes.

Up until the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of books written for children were intensely and unapologetically didactic. They were written to instruct children in religious matters and to warn them away from the temptations of the material world. According to Cline and McBride, it wasn't until around 1850 that novels and adventure stories were written specifically for the pleasure of the young, and they credit Sir Walter Scott, author of *Ivanhoe*, for creating the market for this new brand of fiction (Cline and McBride, 1983, p. 18). In the last half of the nineteenth century, a great many such novels were published for children, including such classics as Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz*, Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*.

By the early twentieth century it was obvious that a new genre had caught on. Authors began to capitalize on the growing interest in fiction for children and adolescents, and it was at this point that the series novel was born (Cline and McBride, p. 19). Edward Stratemeyer, for example, was responsible for over fifteen separate series, of which *The Hardy Boys*, *Tom Swift*, and *Nancy Drew* are probably the most well known. Still, most of these books continued to treat adolescents and their concerns in a moralistic and sentimental manner, probably because the authors were writing *about* kids rather than through kids' eyes. Basically, the message of a typical young adult novel during this period was that if you are upright and honest and you work really hard, everything will work out in the end.

However, 1951 heralded a new frankness in young adult literature (Cline and McBride, p. 26), for it was in 1951 that J.D. Salinger published *The Catcher in the Rye*. Soon afterwards, young adult novels were tackling such topics as teenage pregnancy, abortion, alcoholism, divorce, suicide, homosexuality, and, more recently, AIDS. In modern young adult literature, adolescent protagonists are portrayed more realistically, and often things *don't* work out. Nonetheless, characters are likely to meet challenges face-on and to deal with them thoughtfully and courageously. From didacticism to sentimentality to realism, perhaps it can be said that young adult literature has finally grown up.

To a large extent, the use of bibliotherapy with adolescents has followed the same general path as the coming-to-age of young adult literature, although the changes in bibliotherapy have consistently occurred ten-to-twenty years after the changes in the literature. Beginning with the 1920s and working our way to the present, then, we can see that, like young adult literature, bibliotherapy as applied to children and adolescents has gone from didacticism to sentimentality to realism.

Why begin with the 1920s if bibliotherapy wasn't used with kids until 1946? Or, to go a step further, if books have been used as tools to influence children's behavior long before the term "bibliotherapy" ever existed, shouldn't we go back to the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century to begin our investigation? To do so would certainly be interesting, but the early twentieth century is a logical starting point for the study of bibliotherapy because it was at this time that a flurry of attention was directed toward adolescents as a rapidly growing reading public. Josette Frank describes a cartoon from this period in which a mother stood disconsolately before a bookshelf in her living room. Shakespeare's plays and other classics remained untouched on the shelves, "while lying open on chairs and tables with every appearance of awaiting their readers' eager return were lurid paper editions of thrillers -- *Gang War*, *Life of Capone*, and *Flivver Love*" (Josette, 1937, p. 4). The caption underneath the cartoon read, "Why Mothers Get Gray."

These years saw the influx of series novels and other less "serious" stories, and parents as well as educators and other professionals worried about the impact of such books on their readers. Crosse warned in 1928, "For, in literature, as in life, there are two forms of expression -- constructive or destructive, elevating or debasing; and, unfortunately, the immature often do not know the difference and many read with avidity the most demoralizing subject matter" (Crosse, p. 926). The "immature" that she referred to, of course, were adolescents; and, as an example of the dangers of destructive literature, she tells the story of an observant psychologist who saw a pretty girl on the street one day. As he approached her, he mentally defined her as "good looking, neatly and appropriately dressed" (Crosse, p. 927), but as he passed her and heard her speaking to a friend, he realized that her grammar was atrocious. "It was perfectly obvious," Crosse stated, "that her parents had not carefully supervised her early reading and that her association with literature of worth was entirely lacking" (Crosse, p. 927). In a similar vein, Katherine Lind direfully pronounced in 1936 that excessive reading of escape literature could cause maladjustment, because it encouraged adolescents to retreat from the real world. "Through the creation of a dream world," she cautioned, "the reader becomes a sort of `marginal personality'" (Lind, 1936, p. 467).

The logical response to this frightening state of affairs was to establish a set of guidelines to help parents identify what books were worthwhile and which were trash. To this end, book lists were published that indexed acceptable books for children and adolescents, and as an added bonus also indexed the specific moral values that a child would gain through reading these books. It is in this indexing of moral values that the seeds of bibliotherapy can be seen, because basically the authors of these lists were saying, "Here is how you can mold your child. These are the books that will change children's behavior and enable them to be obedient, productive members of society."

Edwin Starbuck published the first of these guides in 1928, and explained in his introduction the purpose of his work. "In so far as there is a threat of moral disintegration through the mass of cheap and sensuous fiction," he says, "the situation should be alleviated by just such efforts as are symbolized by this book" (Starbuck, 1928, p. 4). His book, along with others that came out at the same time, was easy to use. If a mother were concerned about a particular character flaw in her child, she would simply flip to the back of the book and find the particular virtue she wanted to instill. Next to the particular virtue she would find a listing of appropriate books, and, by turning to the appropriate page, she could then read plot summaries of each book to determine which would be best for her child. For example, if a mother wanted her son to be more unselfish, Starbuck's guide would direct her to Jasmine VanDresser's *Jimsey*, summarized as follows: "Little black Jimsey, happy, unselfish, and ingenious, gives her fretful white playmate some lessons in cheerfulness, after which they enjoy together jolly and exciting adventures" (Starbuck, p. 55). Or, if a father wanted to help his daughter adjust to her handicap, Clara Kircher's guide would direct him to Lenora Weber's *Happy Landing*, about a girl named Martha who keeps her family together while her father is away. "By her faith in and love for her sister Chatty she helps her to overcome her feelings of hatred and jealousy caused by lameness. In an emergency Chatty forgets her bad leg and is able to start using it again" (Kircher, 1945, p. 49).

Gradually, the didacticism of these early stabs at using literature to change children's behavior was replaced by a more child-focused application of bibliotherapy. By 1940, professionals were starting to address the concerns of the adolescent rather than the concerns of the adolescent's parents, and this shift can be seen in the numerous studies and conferences during this time that treat the adolescent in a somewhat sentimental manner. For example, in 1946 Sister Mary Agnes published the first study on bibliotherapy for socially maladjusted children. She prefaces her findings by recounting the poignant tale of how eleven-year-old Mary met her first orphan in a book called *Daddy-Long-Legs*, then went on to devote the entire next year to making scrapbooks and delivering them to poor orphan children (Agnes, 1946, p. 8). In the study she stresses the use of biblio-therapy to help children overcome their problems rather than to develop a particular value or character trait, and her case studies are given titles such as "Ronnie ... Convinced She Is `Dumb'," "Barbara ... In Need of Attention," and "David ... Golden Haired Lochinvar, Disliked" (Agnes, p. 14).

This somewhat sappy treatment of children and adolescents can be seen from the 1940s clear through to the 1960s. Judge Jacob Panken asserted in 1947 that almost all children want to be good, but that a poor home life can turn a child to delinquency (Panken, 1947, p. 72). His solution? Have the juvenile delinquent read an inspiring story about Abraham Lincoln or perhaps Thomas Jefferson. In his article he includes letters from several delinquents who were given this sound advice and who profited from it -- one boy even drew a sketch to show his admiration for Lincoln. Judge Panken commended him, saying, "I like that big foot which you have illustrated. All big fellows have big feet and Lincoln was a big man.... You have done a fine piece of work and I compliment you on it" (Panken, p. 82).

Things hadn't changed much by the 1960s, as evidenced by Jane Dirmeyer's book geared for bibliotherapy with the adolescent. In her guide she stresses that adolescents have special needs and "that unless these special needs are met with some degree of adequacy, the adolescent approaches adulthood unprepared to meet his responsibilities" (Dirmeyer, 1968, p. 19). For example, many adolescents need reassurance that they are normal, and for this reassurance they could read Louise Baker's *Out on a Limb*, about a young woman who has only one leg. Despite her grandmother's grim prediction that "Louise will never get a man" (Dirmeyer, p. 24), she marries twice, serving as an inspiration to teenagers everywhere. Or for a boy, Gene Olson's *The Tall One* might be more appropriate. Seven-feet-tall Mike is ridiculed by his classmates, until he leads his high school to victory in the state basketball game (Dirmeyer, p. 27).

Perhaps it is unfair to poke fun at these well-meaning professionals, for despite the simplicity of their approaches, their hearts were in the right place. Unlike their predecessors, they attempted to use bibliotherapy as a means of helping children and adolescents feel better about themselves, and no doubt in many cases they succeeded. Because of the growing complexity of the world, however, the issues adolescents dealt with were already changing dramatically. Now, in addition to worrying about appearance and popularity, kids worried about divorce, suicide, rape, pregnancy, homosexuality, AIDS, prejudice, drugs and alcohol, social alienation, and even mental illness. The complicated nature of these problems demanded far more than the sentimental pat on the head that bibliotherapy tended to offer, and, in the early 1970s, psychologists, doctors, educators, and other professionals slowly shifted to a more realistic application of bibliotherapy with children and adolescents.

Henry Olsen in 1975 elaborated on the numerous real-world problems faced by children and adolescents, and argued that bibliotherapy is especially appropriate in the modern world because it allows kids a safe way of confronting dilemmas. "Through bibliotherapy," he states, "children have an opportunity to identify, to compensate, and to relive in a controlled manner a problem that they are aware of" (Olsen, 1975, p. 425). He compares bibliotherapy to prevention of a disease, and suggests that, because books help a child develop his or her self-concept, the child will be better adjusted to trying situations in the future (Olsen, p. 425).

A further illustration of bibliotherapy's more realistic approach can be found in its modern-day usage not only with "normal" teenagers and children, but with specialized populations as well. For example, Ronald Lenkowsky effectively used a program of bibliotherapy to positively influence the self-concept of learning disabled and emotionally handicapped adolescents (Lenkowsky, Daybock, Barkowsy, and Puccio, 1987, pp. 483-489). Thomas Hébert used bibliotherapy to meet the special needs of bright boys (Hébert, 1991, p. 210), and John Sheridan implemented a bibliotherapy program for children with divorced or separated parents (Sheridan, Stanley, and de Lissovoy, 1984, pp. 134-141). Other populations with which bibliotherapy has been successfully used are incest victims, rape victims, juvenile delinquents, drug and alcohol abusers, and children with low self-esteem.

In all these applications, bibliotherapy was used as one of several methods of intervention, a point that illustrates another aspect of the realism that was emerging in bibliotherapy's use. No longer was bibliotherapy hailed as an amazing new therapeutic technique; rather, its advocates clearly defined its limits and argued primarily for its use in conjunction with other therapies. "As with any therapy," advised John Pardeck, "there are precautions and limitations when using bibliotherapy. It should not be viewed as a single approach to treatment but rather as an adjunct to other therapies" (Pardeck, 1990, p. 1048). Bibliotherapist Thomas Hébert concurred, warning, "Bibliotherapy is not a cure-all that will automatically influence ... attitudes or behaviors in the desired direction" (Hébert, 1991, p. 210).

An additional aspect of modern bibliotherapy's realistic approach can be seen in its use of contemporary young adult novels. Yes, the ever-present book lists and guides still exist, but no longer are the books coded according to the value to be transmitted or the insecurity to be overcome. Rather, books are categorized according to general themes, and the summaries given are far less didactic or sentimental than in earlier such guides. For example, Theodore Hipple in his 1984 book list recommends John Knowles' *A Separate Peace* for an adolescent who is dealing with feelings of rivalry:

> **This powerful novel presents a reflective look at an adolescent's feelings of rivalry against the background of the global rivalry of World War II. It is Gene's story of his love for and envy of his best friend Phineas, for whom success seems so effortless. Phineas, always seeking to enliven events in the prep school, forms the Super Suicide Society. Gene, constantly looking for signs of competitive feelings in his friend, chooses to view the frequent meetings of the secret club as his friend's attempt to wreck his (Gene's) grades. But he cannot be certain, and in fact he comes to doubt that Phineas ever acts on such motives. Phineas remains a hero; Gene remains the thinker who never quite accepts his own feelings of rivalry. (Hipple, 1984, p. 143)**

This summary is representative of those found in other modern guides. The summary itself is longer than those from earlier lists; the more complex plots of modern young adult fiction cannot be pinned down to only two or three sentences. It should also be noted that the language of the summary is straightforward and mature. No longer are the summaries written in "cutesy" language with the intent to charm the reader. Most importantly, the summary does not offer a happy ending. Hipple suggests that insight has been gained by the main character, but he certainly does not offer a "happily ever after." This approach is in accordance with both the realism of modern young adult fiction, in which sometimes problems are not resolved, and the focus of modern bibliotherapy, in which it is not assumed that adolescents can be "fixed" by the proper application of just the right book.

From didacticism to sentimentality to realism, bibliotherapy with children and adolescents has seen many changes since the beginning of the twentieth century. These changes, along with the wealth of excellent young adult novels now available, have led to an increase in bibliotherapy's popularity and its use by a variety of professionals in a wide array of settings (Riordan and Wilson, pp. 506-507). Despite the fact that bibliotherapy is not a fool-proof cure-all (what therapy is?), it has been found to be an effective technique in many situations. As George Calhoun pointed out in 1987, "...the advantages of bibliotherapy are many, and the disadvantages relatively few" (Calhoun, 1987, p. 941), and it is likely that the use of bibliotherapy with children and adolescents will continue to grow.

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Core Unit 2
Adolescent Development

Adolescence is a time of change, exploration, and discovery. Many psychologists and educators have devised theories that try to explain the stages of human life-span development and how the individual grows at each level of existence. For most theorists, adolescence is the stage during which a growing individual experiments with and examines personal identity, moral upbringing, social conventions, and cognitive skills. Santrock (1995, p.351), comments:

> Adolescents' developing power of thought opens up new cognitive and social horizons. Their thought becomes more abstract, logical, and idealistic; more capable or examining one's own thoughts, other's thoughts, and what others are thinking about oneself; and more likely to interpret and monitor the social world.

Kohlberg and Gilligan (1971), have elaborated upon this self-examination. They point out that adolescents are concerned with:

1. Discovery of the self as something unique, uncertain, and questioning in its position in life.
2. Discovery of the body and its sexual drive, and self-conscious uncertainty about that body.
3. Romantic possibilities and hopes for the self's future.
4. Need for independence, self-determination and choice as opposed to acceptance of adult direction and control.
5. Egocentrism and hedonism (i.e., a focus upon events as they bear upon self-image and immediate experiences).

Authors of young adult literature create adolescent characters whose experiences can help real adolescents with their own developmental journies. Adolescent novels portray characters trying to understand death, prejudice, parents, divorce, sportsmanship, child abuse, drug abuse, sexual abuse, love, hate, friendship, AIDS, suicide, the existence of God, abortion, sex, responsibility for one's actions, and many other aspects of life. Young adult novels can help an adolescent find meaning and models for dealing with self and life's problems.

Adolescent Development Concepts

It is useful for teachers of adolescent literature to become somewhat familair with theories of adolescent development. This unit introduces you to some of these theories and links them to characters from adolescent literature experiencing various developmental stages of adolescence. Examples are drawn from Stringer (1994) and linked to characters from Chris Crutcher's, *Athletic Shorts* (1991), a collection of six short stories.

1. **Moratorium**. Erikson and Marcia have defined moratorium as a period of experimentation that is essential for the individual to attain identity. The adolescent actively explores different roles before making a long-term commitment to stable identity (Stringer, 1994).

In the story, "Goin' Fishin'," high school senior, Lionel Serbousek, is in a state of moratorium. He jumped from his family boat to save himself while a drunk teenage pilot of another boat crashed and killed both of Lionel's parents . Guilt at saving only himself and anger prevent Lionel from making committments and developing a stable personality. He lives by himself in a run down apartment on top of a bar. The roles he experiments playing are those of a loner crippled by guilt and unable to develop relationships with others. He stays in moratorium until he can make a commitment to life by confronting his parents' killer and forgiving the teenage boat pilot as well as himself.

2. **Fidelity** Erickson defines fidelity as one of the essential components of identity achievement. After experimenting with different roles and value systems, the person who develops fidelity makes an ideological commitment, discovers someone to believe in, or finds a cause to be true to without blindly obeying others (Stringer, 1994, p).

In "In The Time I Get," Louie Banks is having a hard time getting over the death of his girlfriend Becky. He has been involved in various delinquent activities and is searching for the truth and meaning of life while having to face the reality of death. He decides to work in his uncle's bar to forget about his problems and meets Darren, an AIDS victim, who is also employed there. At first he is appalled about having to be in the presence of a gay person, but after time, realizes that Darren has feelings and did not ask for the deadly disease. He starts to learn about the universality of death and befriends Darren even when his friends start making fun of him for doing so. By the end of the story, Louie has reached fidelity because he has made a commitment to understanding that people are human beings no matter what their sexual preference happens to be and that everyone dies as a natural aspect of life. He has made it through his crisis of experiencing death and has now developed an identity as a more open-minded, accepting person.

3. **Emotional Autonomy**. Steinberg (1993) describes several components of emotional autonomy. One component is the de-idealization of parents. In addition, individuals who achieve emotional autonomy handle criticism, hurdles, and setbacks constructively by developing their own inner strengths and self esteem (Atwater, 1992). Atwater indicates that emotional autonomy develops more slowly than behavioral autonomy and it evolves primarily through relationships with others" (Stringer, 1994).

Angus Bethune, in "A Brief Moment in the Life of Angus Bethune," provides a model for how an adolescent can develop emotional autonomy. Angus is confident about who he is even though he is an obese high school kid with two sets of gay parents. Furthermore, he has been voted by the student body to be their king at the senior prom. It was a joke that he got elected but he decides to take the gig seriously because he gets his chance in the limelight dancing with the queen, Melissa Lefevre, the girl of his dreams. The problem is that he cannot dance. The story shows his courage and understanding of human nature as he takes on this challenge. He even helps his parents relax and overcome their anxiety for him which shows that he has a genuine understanding of them. He is cool-headed, confident, and willing to take on new experiences in the face of criticism and barriers because he has reached the state of emotional autonomy.

4. **Identity Confusion**. Erickson and Marcia describe this state as when an individual has not made a firm commitment to any particular vocation or ideology. It can be expressed in numerous ways and is particularly common during early adolescence (Muuss, 1988). Identity confusion may lead to adolescents' isolation, chronic delinquency, or suicide. Identity confusion is also expressed through adolescents' overidentification with the peer group (Stringer, 1994).

In "Telephone Man," Jack seems to be confused with his identity. He is a loner who is always getting into fights with minority students. They think Jack is a racist because he uses racial slurs when talking to these minorities. He gets into fights and usually ends up losing. He identifies with his father who is a racist and Jack never questions this outlook until he goes to a new school that has a minority principal. There, he gets into a fight with a Chinese gang but is saved by a black kid named Hawk. He also feels that the principal is nice and on his side. At this point, he starts to question his outlook on minorities and tries to understand that not all are terrible. He is searching for meaning in a world where he has not yet made any solid ideological commitments. He is just a kid believing everything he hears and has a small world view without seeing the bigger picture of life. When he starts to see the bigger picture, he will be on his way to achieving some type of identity. The story ends with him starting that process.

5. **Identity Foreclosure**. Without taking time to experiment with different roles and never questioning their beliefs, individuals prematurely choose an identity that parents or peers select for them. Individuals who make a commitment to a career, religion, or political system without experiencing a crisis illustrate identity foreclosure (Stringer, 1994).

This one is a little harder to find because the individual who has reached identity foreclosure has already made commitments to life without going through turmoil and crises to get there. Most young adult literature portrays the individual having to make sense of problems before making commitment. Though Crutcher's short story collect has no protagonist at this stage, sometimes authors portray secondary characters at this stage. An example of this would be an adolescent who has totally embraced, without much struggle or thought, the philosophy of a particular group or individual. These are individuals who have become whole-hearted, but thoughtless, spokespersons for the either the status quo or for the newest fad viewpoint. The point is that they chose before giving the ideas enough time.

Another way to examine the development of adolescent identity is in relation to the development of belief systems. Included with this packet is "Spiritual Themes in Young Adult Books" by K.L. Mendt. In this article, Mendt (1996) examines the adolescent search for identify and meaning from a more spiritual perspective. As youth define themselves, they choose from a myriad of beliefs which mold and differentiate them from others and the adult world. Mendt discusses several classic and recent examples of young adult literature which reveal the struggles of adolescents during this important developmental stage. Many of the stages discussed earlier in relation to Kohlberg, Gilligan, and Stringer are also appropriate tools in understanding developing spiritual identities and beliefs.

Suggested reading List

Books that deal with adolescent development

Bauer, Joan. Squashed. Delacorte Press, 1992. 194 pp.

> ***Ellie, a high school girl, is going through growing pains in more than one way. First, she is competing in the town pumpkin growing contest and spends hours trying to cultivate her pumpkin, Max. During this time, she deals with the death of her mother, anxieties concerning boys, evils committed by friends and foes, and learning what winning truly means. The story climaxes in an unforgettable sceneat the town fair.***

Brooks, Bruce. The Moves Make the Man. Scholastic, 1984. 252 pp.

> ***Jerome Foxworthy, a black high school student, is a great basketball player and knows all the right moves to be successful on the court and in life. He meets a white athlete named Bix Rivers who impresses him. Jerome wants to teach him the "moves" to make it through his troubled life but Bix has a problem accepting anything that is not the truth. Will Bix be able to get through his misfortune with the advice of Jerome or will he go it alone?***

Crutcher, Chris. Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes. Greenwillow Books, 1993. 216 pp.

Sarah Byrnes and Eric Calhoune are defined as "terminal uglies" in their high school by their fellow students. Both have developed a cold heart, but help each other discover the beauties in life. Various discussions in the classroom including the nature of man, the existence of God, abortion, organized religion, and suicide aid in their understanding of life.

Crutcher, Chris. Ironman. Greenwillow Books, 1995. 181 pp.
Bo Brewster has a problem controlling his rage and is put into an anger management group in his high school. Having to cope with the dysfunctional relationship with his dad and trying to win the triathlon are not easy tasks for Bo. With the help of his friends, Bo sees the truth about his past and others like him.

Hobbs, Will. Downriver. Atheneum, 1991. 204 pp
Seven teenagers decide to abandon their outdoor education program, Discovery Unlimited, and raft together alone down the Colorado River. During this "adventure" they run into many problems and see many sights that they will never forget. Throughout their trials, they discover insights about their identities and who they really are as individuals.

Malmgren, Dallin. The Ninth Issue. Delacorte Press, 1989. 181 pp.
Successful in Missouri as a great football player, Blue Hocker has moved to Texas but cannot make the high school team. Struggling with his identity and perceptions as a "nobody,", he decides to join the school newspaper staff. There, he learns a great deal about his own and other people's lives by bonding with the eight member staff.

Paulsen, Gary. Canyons. Dell Publishing, 1990. 184 pp.
Fifteen-year-old Brennen Cole discovers an old skull in a hidden part of a canyon. After having dreams and visions about it, he researches and finds that it belonged to an Apache boy named Coyote Runs. Brennen feels a bond with this dead boy and tries to make meaning out of his own life by returning the skull to its rightful burial place. Many obstacles and adventures await Brennen as he tries to accomplish this task and search for peace.

Sebestyen, Ouida. The Girl in the Box. Bantam, 1988. 182 pp.
Jackie McGee is kidnapped after an argument while angrily walking through the night to return a portable typewriter and ream of paper to her ex-friend. The kidnapper locks her in a tiny cellar with a limited amount of food and water. Her only way to communicate is by typing notes which she pushes through a small crack under the door. As the days stretch onward, the notes take on the form of a reflective journal in which Jackie examines her life and is forced by this ordeal to grow toward psychological adulthood.

Shoup, Barbara. Wish You Were Here. Hyperion, 1994. 282 pp.
Jackson is in the last year of his high school career and has to deal with hisss parent's divorce and loss of his best friend, Brady. Told from Jackson's point of view, the story shows the psychological turmoils of having to grow up quickly in the face of sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll. Jackson learns a great deal during the year as his experience will culminate with a trip to Graceland to see Elvis.

Voight, Cynthia. A Solitary Blue. Atheneum, 1984. 189 pp.

Junior High loner, Jeff Greene, is forced to look at life's realities after his parents get divorced. He must learn to see both of his parents' worlds and make a decision as to who he should live with. His search for truth leads him on a journey where he will meet different people and experience situations that will help him discover who he is and see truths that linger behind false images.

A Selection of Young Adult Books with Spiritual Themes

(Annotated by Mendt, 1996)

Anaya, Rudolfo. Bless Me, Ultima. Berkeley: TQS, 1972.
A very young Chicano boy becomes a man as he searches for the true source of salvation and questions the destinies his parents dream of for him.

Bach, Richard. Jonathan Livingston Seagull. Avon, 1970.
A seagull strives for perfect knowledge of flight. He finds paradise, becomes a teacher of others, and learns to transcend both space and time.

Coatsworth, Elizabeth. The Cat Who Went to Heaven. Aladdin/Macmillan, 1990.
A Japanese artist is convinced by his cat's example to include the cat in a painting of Buddha and theanimal reincarnations he experienced.

Craven, Margaret. I Heard the Owl Call My Name. Dell, 1973.
A young Catholic priest, who does not know he will soon die, discovers the spirituality and sadnessof a dwindling group of Native Americans in the Northwest. Before he dies, he learns what life isabout.

Farley, Carol. Ms. Isabelle Cornell, Herself. Athaneum, 1980.
A preteen experiences a minister stepfather, Korea, and Buddhism, and solves a mystery.

Hesse, Hermann. Siddhartha. New Directions, 1951.
The classic story of the young Siddhartha's quest for spiritual wisdom.

Highwater, Jamake. Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey. Lippincott, 1977.
Anpao, son of the Sun, sets out to find his father so that he can get permission to marry his true love.On his way he hears stories of the origin of the world, of its creatures, and of strange phenomena, and has many adventures. On his return he encounters the damage done by the arrival of new peoples in his lands.

Kerr, M.E. Is That You, Miss Blue? Dell, 1975.
Those in charge of a girls' parochial boarding school persecute anyone different: poor students, atheists, and a teacher who has a strong faith and believes she has communicated with Jesus.

Levitin, Sonia. The Return. Fawcett Juniper, 1978.
Desta, a young Ethiopian Jew, leaves her home because of religious persecution and journeys to a camp in Sudan in hopes of making it to Israel.

Marshall, James Vance. Walkabout. Sundance, 1959.
Two American children stranded in the Australian Outback meet a bush boy who ultimately dies because the children circumvent his spiritual quest for manhood.

Paterson, Katherine. Jacob Have I Loved. Harper Trophy, 1980.

A young girl feels always second to her sister, like the twins Jacob and Esau of the Bible. She feels God despises her for no reason and makes her life go sour, but before she is completely lost to bitterness she begins to forge a new identity and life.

Paulsen, Gary. The Island. Dell, 1988.
Wil finds an island that becomes a spiritual home for him. On the island he can meditate, write, and paint. But his living on the island makes some people uncomfortable.

Potok, Chaim. The Chosen. Simon and Schuster, 1967.
Two teenage boys, one Orthodox and the other Hassidic, meet when one tries to kill the other with a baseball. They develop a deep and abiding friendship that is put to several difficult tests.

Rylant, Cynthia. Missing May. Dell Yearling, 1992.
May dies and Ob misses her so much that he considers trying to contact her. Instead, he makes contact with those around him.

______. A Fine White Dust. Dell Yearling, 1986.
Pete is saved by a drifting revivalist preacher and decides God has called him to bring the word of God to others. But Pete's faith is tested.

Service, Pamela. The Reluctant God. Atheneum, 1988.
Lorna wakens Ameni, who has been asleep in his tomb for 4000 years, and together they try to recover an artifact which guarantees eternal rest for ancient Egyptians.

Staples, Suzanne Fisher. Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind. Knopf/Borzoi Sprinters, 1989.
Twelve-year-old Shabanu would rather take care of the camels than marry, especially when circumstances force her to marry a man 20 or more years her senior. But the norms of her Pakistani/Moslem culture dictate that she submit.

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Assignment Options

1. From the selected reading lists, read two books and write a 6-7 page paper discusses adolescent development concepts presented in the readings for this course using specific examples and citations from the adolescent novels. At least three of the developmental concepts mentioned in readings should be addressed. Conclude with ideas of how you would use these books in your classroom to address these concepts.

2. Develop and describe a teaching unit adressing adolscent development and using books from the list or others you've checked with your instructor. The unit should include:
   a. Three classroom activities that focus on your students' understanding and application of the adolescent concepts to the books and their own lives. Explain each activity in detail (time needed, outcomes expected, room set-up, outside equipment if necessary, anything else you want to include)

   b. Ten questions that could be asked in the classroom that would spark discussion about the books and your students understanding of the concepts.

   c. A student handout that would make the adolescent development concepts easier to understand for your students.

3. Find three songs, movies, T.V. shows, poems, stories, or music videos that exemplify the five adolescent development concepts. You can use any combination you want. Ex.-(1 song and 2 movies), (3 poems), (1 T.V. show, 1 story, 1 video), etc. Relate these to one or two books from the selected list in a 5-7 page paper.

4. Find a theorist of adolescent development not presented in the overview and reading for this unit. Present the ideas of this theorist (including citations) and then discuss how these ideas are portrayed in 1-2 examples of young adult literature.

ALAN Review Fall, 1994

The Psychological Changes of Adolescence: A Test of Character

Sharon A. Stringer

Through interdisciplinary collaboration, Virginia Monseau (see article p. 31) and I have used Robert Cormier's novels in English courses and Psychology classes at Youngstown State University. Virginia has been a guest speaker in my Adolescent Psychology class for three years. I have also given several presentations in her undergraduate and graduate classes on "Adolescence in Literature." Robert Cormier's novel, *After the First Death* , has also been required reading for my course on Adolescent Psychology.

At the beginning of each quarter, I ask students to discuss tests of character from their own lives. Later, students write a paper describing the identity crises and moral development of the protagonists in Cormier's novel. The effect of the novel in psychology classes is stunning. On the course evaluation, one student wrote, "I loved it. I'm not a big reader. I couldn't put this novel down. Keep using it." Another student wrote that the writing assignment "was a good experience. It made me draw on my own inner strength, bring out my own ideas. The paper helped me to put to use what I learned and this is important because it shows what I understood."

Men and women identify with Kate in *After the First Death* as she struggles to listen to her inner voice, abandon her former disguises, and develop genuine courage in the midst of terror. Like Adam in *I Am the Cheese* , and Barney Snow in *The Bumblebee Flies Anyway* , our own self discovery raises issues related to trust, fear of disclosure and silence. The challenge for teachers and writers is to foster strength of character in education as we bridge theory and practice. Understanding the conflicts and changes of adolescence moves us closer to that goal.

The first section of this paper highlights the social setting and the psychological changes that trigger identity crises and moral conflicts in adolescents. Then, the work of Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Carol Gilligan serves as a backdrop for illustrating "tests of character" that adolescents face in Robert Cormier's novels. To conclude, I will describe potential outcomes and educational implications of these tests.

Adolescents face complex identity crises and moral conflicts today because there are mixed cultural definitions of "health" and "strength of character." On the one hand, we hear a message to be humble, to show stoicism, selflessness or sacrifice. Carol Gilligan and others (Gilligan, Ward, & Taylor, 1988; Lerner, 1989) remind us, however, that silence, conformity, or submission can occur at too high a cost to selfhood. Separation accompanies the development of identity during adolescence (Kroger, 1989). Yet, independence evolves in connection to family, peers, and society (Conger, 1991; Steinberg, 1993). Silence, distance, and severing family ties can lead to overidentification with the peer group, identity confusion, and excessive rebellion (Steinberg, 1993).

Research indicates that self esteem decreases during early adolescence, particularly for young women (Atwater, 1992). Adolescents' idealism coincides with their enhanced sense of uniqueness, self consciousness, and critical thinking. Combined with the increase in family conflict during early adolescence, these changes heighten adolescents' need for peer approval. Conformity to the peer group peaks at approximately twelve to fourteen years of age (Steinberg, 1993).

Collectively, these changes make adolescents targets for psychological intimidation. Intimidation is a central theme in Cormier's novels. The terrorists, shrewd judges of risk, are experts at manipulating others. In *The Chocolate War* , Archie, the mastermind of the Vigils, is tender one moment and cruel the next. His inconsistency keeps followers vigilant. Occasionally, Artkin of *After the First Death* gives Miro praise or offers tidbits of "inside" information. The leaders' use of intermittent praise, propaganda, and bribery attract loyal gang members. Fear and the threat of losing peer approval motivate young adults to perform acts for the group that they would not do alone. Moreover, a conspiracy of silence and diffusion of responsibility within the group maintain the status quo until there is a "stand-off" and final test of power.

Suspense mounts as several protagonists detect a "hidden agenda." They suspect that "things are not what they appear to be on the surface." Labeling themselves as "spies," the protagonists begin an earnest search for their identity. Adam of *I Am the Cheese* gradually discovers that he is the bait in a dangerous "cat and mouse" game. Adults' interrogations of adolescents in some stories resemble "double jeopardy." Who can trust whom? The sense of mystery and disorientation catalyzes adolescents to dig deeper and pursue the truth.

Individuals' responses to conflicts, pressures, and setbacks partially determine the outcomes of tests of character. How does the search for identity mold a person's "strength of character"? Erik Erikson proposed that during the fifth psycho-social stage of development, adolescents face a "normative crisis" that involves a struggle to achieve an authentic identity. According to Erikson, identity development is a lifelong process that assumes special significance at adolescence. Adolescents need to experiment and test different roles before they make a commitment to a career, political system, or religion. Erikson and James Marcia emphasize that in our complex society, this time of experimentation, the *moratorium* , is crucial for identity achievement (Atwater, 1992; Conger, 1993).

Erikson defines one component of identity achievement as "*fidelity* " (Kroger, 1989). After experimenting with different roles and value systems, the person who develops fidelity makes an ideological commitment, discovers someone to believe in, or finds a cause to be true to without blindly obeying others.

Emotional autonomy may accompany identity achievement. One step in the development of emotional autonomy is the de-idealization of parents (Steinberg, 1993). The individuals who achieve emotional autonomy handle criticism, hurdles, and setbacks constructively by developing their own inner strengths and self esteem (Atwater, 1992). With the development of identity and emotional autonomy during late adolescence, such individuals are less dependent upon parent or peer approval.

The characters in Cormier's novels face moral dilemmas that parallel the conflicts presented in Lawrence Kohlberg's and Carol Gilligan's research on moral development. Their stories and dilemmas pose two tests of character. One conflict centers on the decision to conform to authority or disobey in order to preserve the rights of the individual. A second conflict is to balance a rational focus on rights and laws with an ethic of care and concern for human relationships.

According to Lawrence Kohlberg and colleagues, the moral decisions of adolescents and adults in the United States often reflect the *Conventional Level* of moral development. This level encompasses Stage 3 and Stage 4. At Stage 3, people win approval by pleasing others, being a good son or daughter, remaining loyal to the family or the peer group and conforming to social norms. At Stage 4, individuals emphasize their duty to a larger group such as the community (Conger, 1991).

Kohlberg proposed that relatively few people attain the highest level of moral development. At this *Postconventional Level*, people base their moral decisions upon internalized principles. Human dignity, fairness, and justice are central concerns. Individuals no longer view authority as "all-knowing" and they recognize that unjust laws must be defied. If faced with a conflict between society's rules and their conscience, individuals at the *Postconventional Level* follow their consciences.

Carol Gilligan provides a complementary vision of moral maturity (Gilligan *et al*., 1988). She proposes that the highest level of moral development for men and women involves integrating the emphasis upon justice with an ethic of care. The justice orientation provides impartial focus on rights, laws, and society. In contrast, the care perspective offers a more personal focus on relationships and attachment to others.

Identity crises and moral conflicts can promote positive change and growth. In Cormier's novels, heroes and heroines perform acts of fidelity. As a victim of memory experiments, Barney Snow persists with his plan to fly the *Bumble Bee* with Mazzo. This "last hurrah" may signify that what one individual accomplishes in his or her lifetime does make a difference, no matter how corrupt or powerful the group. As Barney explains to his friend Billy, "I've got to do something" (p. 142). Their flight in the car speaks to human choice and freedom. In *After the First Death* , Kate's search for fidelity emerges during the terrorists' siege. She claims "she had never been a hotshot in the philosophy department" yet "this new knowledge of hers, this new hope . . . the possibility that hope comes out of hopelessness and the opposite of things carry the seeds of birth-love out of

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hate, good out of evil" (p. 118). Kate also develops emotional autonomy as she searches inward for a courage she never thought she possessed.

In response to crises, individuals may resist intimidation. Their defiance of authority empowers their own sense of self, preserves their integrity, and promotes their moral commitment to fairness and justice. In *The Chocolate War*, Jerry faces a lonely struggle when he refuses to obey the Vigils. By going against the group, he takes a much harder path. However, he is a champion for individuality and freedom.

Intimidation, fear, and the loss of innocence can also create setbacks or stunt growth. Erikson proposes that when a person does not achieve identity, he or she experiences *identity confusion*. Although expressed in numerous ways during early adolescence, identity confusion as a longterm outcome of the fifth psychosocial stage may lead to adolescents' isolation, chronic delinquency, drug abuse, or suicide. Cormier's novels frequently describe adolescents' disorientation in time and place, a phenomenon that Erikson states is a common symptom of identity confusion (Muuss, 1988). Identity confusion is also expressed by adolescents' overidentification with the peer group (Muuss, 1988; Steinberg, 1993).

Without experimentation, individuals may prematurely choose an identity that parents or peers select for them. According to James Marcia, individuals who make a commitment to a career, religion or political system without experiencing a crisis illustrate *identity foreclosure* (Atwater, 1992).

Moral indifference and silence is a potential outcome of tests of character. Many young adults in Cormier's novels submit to authority or peer pressure. Corruption begins with smaller evils but eventually escalates to total disregard for care and human dignity. Moral deterioration may become so rampant that nobody "waves a red flag" to stop the victimizations.

Others are ultimately haunted by their indifference. These individuals are never the same after they overdo their allegiance to the group. Hurting other people takes its toll. In *After the First Death*, General Marchand performs his duty for his country but is devastated by his betrayal of his son Ben. If this father had developed a strong ethic of care, would he have been so aloof at the eleventh hour?

The cumulative effect of corruption may be the loss of innocence. Like Henry in *Tunes for Bears To Dance To*, a person may initially feel doomed by his or her first major setback. During the final showdown, Jerry experiences a loss of innocence in *The Chocolate War*.

> A new sickness invaded Jerry, the sickness of knowing what he had become, another animal, another beast, another violent person in a violent world, inflicting damage, not disturbing the universe but damaging it. He had allowed Archie to do this to him. (p. 183)

Several protagonists in Cormier's novels discover new information that shatters their former idolization of a parent or authority figure.

As these stories reveal, "winners" and "losers" are not easy to recognize. Heroes and heroines may be inconspicuous. This theme in literature and life strikes a chord for all of us. Happy endings where "mighty" champions receive medals or applause as they pass the toughest tests of character are rare. Unsung heroes and heroines may be discouraged, trampled, or defeated by forces beyond their control while the weak come out "on top." The odds of surviving, winning, or losing can also "flip-flop." Is that insight character building or disillusioning?

Unless we dig deeper, we may avoid solutions to tests of character. Like the protagonists in the novels, we now have clues that things are not always what they appear to be on the surface. Our society programs us to look for external symbols of achievement. A familiar message is that there are few role models for young people today. Are we looking in the wrong place? Tests of character are important in education, particularly when young people yearn for quick answers and tangible signs of change. On that note, Muuss (1988) describes the need to create "meaningful frustration" in the classroom. Robert Cormier's novels are a poignant reminder that often inner strength and genuine change begin slowly. We can save the fireworks for later!

3

Key Concepts

I have drawn upon the references cited at the end of this paper for defining these concepts that are listed below and included in my paper.

* *Moratorium* . As defined by Erik Erikson and by James Marcia, this is a period of experimentation that is essential for the individual to attain identity. The adolescent actively explores different roles before making a long-term commitment.

* *Fidelity* is defined by Erikson as one of the essential components of identity achievement. After experimenting with different roles and value systems, the person who develops fidelity makes an ideological commitment, discovers someone to believe in, or finds a cause to be true to without blindly obeying others. (Refer to page 235 of Erikson's *Identity Youth and Crisis* for a full description.)

* *Emotional Autonomy* . There are different components of emotional autonomy, as Lawrence Steinberg (1993) describes in his text. One component in the development of emotional autonomy is the de-idealization of parents. The individuals who achieve emotional autonomy handle criticism, hurdles, and setbacks constructively by developing their own inner strengths and self esteem (Atwater, 1992). As Eastwood Atwater (1992) explains, emotional autonomy develops more slowly than behavioral autonomy and it evolves primarily through our relationships with others.

* *Identity Confusion* . As defined by Erik Erikson and James Marcia, the individual has not made a firm commitment to any particular vocation or ideology. It can be expressed in numerous ways and is particularly common during early adolescence (Muuss, 1988). As a longterm outcome of the fifth psycho-social stage, identity confusion may lead to adolescents' isolation, chronic delinquency, or suicide. Identity confusion is also expressed through adolescents' overidentification with the peer group (Muuss, 1988; Steinberg, 1993).

* *Identity Foreclosure* . Without taking time to experiment with different roles and never questioning their beliefs, individuals prematurely choose an identity that parents or peers select for them. According to James Marcia, individuals who make a commitment to a career, religion, or political system without experiencing a crisis illustrate identity foreclosure (Atwater, 1992).

Discussion questions I use in Adolescent Psychology classes:

1. Why do so few people ever attain high levels of moral development? Do you think that prediction underestimates people?

2. Describe (from literature, psychology, and life) your images of strength of character, "black sheep," and "tests of character" (for example, tests of honesty, tests of courage). What options do people have?

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5

ALAN Review, Fall, 1994

Studying Cormier's Protagonists: Achieving Power Through Young Adult Literature

Virginia R. Monseau

Having taught high school English for several years back in the late seventies and early eighties, I can't help but think of my former students as I consider the concepts that Sharon Stringer discusses in her article in this issue. I remember Linda, who hung around with the "burnouts" and who once told me she belonged in the "loony bin." One spring morning she brought me a daffodil. And I think about Tim, one of the class troublemakers. (I made sure he sat in the first desk, directly in my line of vision.) Imagine my shock the day he wrote me a note, asking why we didn't read and write more poetry.

Now that I think back on it, I realize that these students were indeed "identity confused." They had both experimented with drugs; they were frequently in trouble; and Linda had even attempted suicide once. Most of us have Lindas and Tims in our classes, but we're so busy with our personal and professional lives that we usually don't think much about their problems or how we might help them better understand what's happening in their lives. I wonder now what might have happened had I used some of Robert Cormier's books in my ninth-grade classes. *I Am the Cheese* , *The Chocolate War* , and *After the First Death* were certainly popular back then, as they are now, but curricular constraints and a dearth of money prohibited their use in our very traditional English classes. How I regret that now.

Though I'll never know how my students might have reacted to any of these books, I'd like to speculate on what might be gained by using these novels, not only as compelling literary works, but also as a means of helping students understand what's happening to them during this difficult time called "adolescence." I concentrate on these three novels because, of all Cormier's books, I think these three are the most frequently used in classrooms today.

Concepts like "identity confusion," "fidelity," "emotional autonomy," and "identity achievement" are abstract and difficult for some students to grasp; but, when we connect them to the behavior of fictional characters that adolescents care about, they suddenly become meaningful. Stringer's article speaks of "tests of character." All of us are tested just about every day of our lives, but most adults can deal with these tests with some degree of confidence because of past experience. Adolescents, however -- untested and insecure -- must have the chance to experiment with different roles, to succeed and to fail, before they can commit to a certain way of thinking and behaving. This period of "moratorium," as psychologists Erik Erikson and James Marcia call it, is essential.

What better way to understand this concept than to look at Jerry Renault in *The Chocolate War* ? He seems conventional enough at first, trying out for the football team, ogling girls. But something inside him, which he doesn't quite understand, compels him to "go against the grain," to be a nonconformist in a world of conformity. To use another cliché, he is "testing the waters" to see if Trinity -- indeed the world -- will accept him as an individual. What happens to him as a result is devastating, but does this make his nonconformity any less worthwhile? What do Jerry's actions say about him as a person? Has he achieved "emotional autonomy," no longer dependent on peer approval, or is his final advice to Goober, "Don't disturb the universe," a sign of capitulation?

And what about Kate in *After the First Death* ? Having played only the role of "all-American girl" all her life, what psychological changes does she undergo as she copes with the responsibility of a busload of children and the reality of death at the hands of terrorists? Unwittingly Kate is thrust into the role of protector, forced to look inward for the courage and strength she is not sure is there. Like many females, she has been accustomed to seeking outside validation of her worth, demonstrated by her wish that her parents were there to tell her she is brave. We as readers see her courage, but she does not. By the end of the novel, we can see that Kate is the perfect example of psychologist Carol Gilligan's definition of "moral maturity" -- an integration of justice with an ethic of care. Not only has she shown compassion and concern for the children in her charge, all the while plotting a means of escape; but she also gives comfort to the young terrorist Miro, even though she is repulsed by what he stands for. Cradling him in her arms, his gun crushing her ribs as he rails hysterically at her suggestion that Artkin was his father, she "rocked him gently, the way she had rocked the children on the bus, crooning softly, a song without a tune, words without meaning, but sounds to bring him comfort and solace" (*First Death* , p. 210). This is a new Kate, a different Kate from the one who boarded the bus that morning to take the children to day camp. After much soul-searching, she is just beginning to understand who she really is. Ironically Miro robs her of the chance for further exploration when he squeezes the trigger, killing her instantly.

As we study Kate, we must also study Miro. Cormier has spoken and written of Miro's "monstrous innocence," born of the life he has led, a young man trained by terrorists to kill or be killed. Miro is the perfect example of an adolescent who is in "identity foreclosure." His strong identification with the adult terrorist Artkin interferes with his personality development as he continuously represses his natural adolescent desires and inclinations for fear of incurring Artkin's wrath and losing his respect. He likes Elvis Presley, for example, confiding this to Kate in a weak moment, but he would never let Artkin see this "frivolous" side of his nature. He is sexually curious, fighting his attraction to Kate, refusing to give in to his natural desire to learn about the opposite sex because Artkin would not approve.

Miro has taken on the role of terrorist without trying any other options, suppressing his own needs and sublimating them to the needs of his "homeland." Do we as readers take pity on him for this? Do we try to understand his blind devotion to a homeland he has never seen? A letter written by a student in Stringer's Adolescent Psychology class might give us some insight. It was written in response to my assignment to write to one of the characters in *After the First Death* .

Dear Miro,

You emerged from your young life without the necessary background to make something of yourself; so people would think. But you somehow had the ability to excel in your language course at the "special school."

How sad it is that you were not taken out of the dreadful situation that you were in and nurtured and developed into a worthwhile human being.

I believe that the capacity was there for you to become someone who was a compassionate, loving person. But I want to avoid trying to think of you in terms of my society. I'm trying to look at how you could have become an asset in your world.

Perhaps you could have taught others the language that you found so easy to learn. So that they too could have felt the pride you felt as you spoke and understood words from another country. In that sharing, you may have become close enough to another person to create a bond of trust and caring.

You learned your task well, so I do not want to think little of you for your actions. You did exactly as you were trained to do.

This college student obviously was moved to try to understand Miro rather than condemn him. It would be interesting to see how high school students respond to such an assignment and how their response reflects their understanding of Miro's situation.

Speaking of young protagonists in *After the First Death* , let's not forget Ben Marchand. He is certainly "identity confused," so closely identifying with his father, the General. Indeed, Cormier builds part of the novel on the confusion of the Ben/General personality. Like Artkin, the General is a "patriot" who sacrifices his son to "The Cause." Unlike Artkin, the General lives to regret it. On the one hand, the "father" dies, leaving the "son" to terrorize again; on the other, the son dies, leaving the father schizophrenic and unable to function. Does Ben's identity confusion cause him to commit suicide by jumping off the bridge? Or was Ben killed in the hijacking skirmish, a victim of his father's betrayal and of his own blind trust? Do we admire Ben or pity him? Another student letter provides an interesting perspective.

Dear Ben,

I thought it really took a lot of courage and commitment to meet with the terrorists and try to help end the crisis. At first I thought that you were only attending Fort Delta because that is what your father wanted, a kind of identity foreclosure I guess. However, even someone who is in foreclosure would question risking their life, unless they were really dedicated to helping in the situation. Now I realize that you were definitely identity achieved, maybe more than the others involved. The only thing is, you should have questioned more and tried to get a broader understanding of the situation. On the whole, I'd say you did a pretty good job!

This student obviously admires Ben, though he doesn't explain exactly in his letter what leads him to believe that Ben is identity achieved. Such a response would be provocative material for class discussion.

So far I have explored the more subtle forms of identity crises in Cormier's work, but in *I Am the Cheese* we have a protagonist who is *literally* confused about his identity. Confined to an institution, yet imagining that he is on a bike-riding journey to find his father, Paul Delmonte/Adam Farmer tries desperately to remember the events of his young life that have led him to this strange existence. From the flashbacks that we get, we see that his family life was rather dull and uneventful -- his father mysterious and his mother withdrawn. Cormier describes Adam as an outsider, a loner who is looking for affection and companionship. This is where Amy Hertz comes in. His association with her is his first attempt to try on a new role, the role of mischief-maker. Her "Numbers" give him a chance to be daring, as they do silly things like leaving a cart of baby food jars in front of the Kotex display at the local supermarket. But Adam's "moratorium" is cut short when his family is given a new identity and comes under the "protection" of Mr. Grey and his associates. After a car accident, in which his mother is killed and his father eventually run down, he is captured and kept a virtual prisoner, unable to become emotionally autonomous, lost in a world of drugs and interrogations. Like Jerry, Kate, Miro, and Ben, Adam too has lost his innocence -- the cumulative effect of the corruption around him.

The "mixed messages" that Stringer alludes to in her article might be a good starting point for discussion of identity development with students who are reading the novels of Cormier. Examining the pressures that society and the family place on young people by studying the situations encountered by the protagonists in these books may help students make better sense of their own lives. Exploring definitions of "character" and "self-esteem" with them and inviting them to draw from their own experience, for example, seems an effective way to help students make connections between fictional characters and themselves. Discussing "insecurity" and "intimidation" and how they affect our everyday lives is another step toward understanding. Encouraging adolescent readers to ask *why* certain characters behave as they do prompts them to look beyond the literal and the obvious to the more subtle forces at work in fiction and in life.

Cormier's fiction is rich in possibility, especially as we explore the much-criticized aspects of his novels. Does a book's grim ending engender a loss of hope? Or does it arouse the fighter in us who says, "I will not be defeated. Evil will not prevail"? Adolescent readers who can see that emotional autonomy depends on this kind of inner strength are well on their way to facing the difficulties inherent in growing up.

Using Robert Cormier's Novels to Explore Identity Development

* *Moratorium* (experimentation with roles).

Brainstorm as a class the different roles adolescents play. In journals, ask students to reflect on the roles they've played in their lives. Whom did they try to be? Why? What was the result? Then examine the roles played by fictional characters. (This examination could perhaps lead to an essay on the value to identity achievement of role experimentation.)

* *Emotional Autonomy* (gaining a sense of self).

Have students in small groups discuss the influence of parents and peers on their lives. (Or students might cite instances in their journals.) Ask students to write a letter thanking someone who has been influential in their lives in some way. Survey the class to determine whether the letters were written to parents, peers, or others. Discuss the influence of parents, peers, and other adults on fictional characters and how that influence promotes or impedes the development of emotional autonomy.

* *Identity Confusion* (impediment to identity achievement).

Talk about the importance of belonging to a group. Brainstorm what might happen when an adolescent feels isolated or left out. Have small groups discuss fictional characters who are identity confused and why.

* *Identity Foreclosure* (impediment to identity achievement).

Explore in journals how children follow in parents' footsteps or try to be like peers in choice of dress, career, politics, and/or religion. Discuss whether this is good or bad and how it might interfere with identity achievement. Explore further in discussion of fictional characters. (Or students might create and perform skits showing what happens when adolescents conform and don't conform.)

References

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______. *I Am the Cheese* . Dell, 1978.

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Spiritual Themes in Young Adult Books

K. L. Mendt

We Americans have plenty of material things: cars, houses, running shoes, brand name convenience foods, and video games. However, we often lack spiritual things: ceremonies, faith, a sense of transcendence, and spiritual connection. Spiritual poverty can leave us empty and lost when we experience a crisis in our lives, such as a divorce, a layoff, a long-distance move, a life-threatening illness, or the death of someone close.

A crisis in the lives of young adults is the psychosocial crisis of identity versus role confusion as described by Erik Erikson. It is the task of the adolescent to leave childhood behind and to define herself, to create an identity that can sustain her through the loss of innocence that we know of as the passage into adulthood. Those who remember young adulthood might agree that the passage can be as emotionally confusing and exhausting for the adolescent as any crisis an adult might face. Young adults can thus benefit from a sense of spirituality in their lives, an aspect of themselves they can draw on to help them integrate their new understandings of adult concepts, concepts such as their own mortality, for example.

Because young adults are immersed in the psychosocial crisis of identity definition and are beginning to decide for themselves what they will ultimately believe in terms of spirituality, young adulthood is an opportune time to explore spirituality. It is an opportune time to learn about the myriad belief systems operating in our world, the young adult quest for spiritual knowledge, and the young adult process of identity definition in relation to spirituality. Many young adult books can provide the spiritual information young adults need to assuage the loneliness of their passage; some of the possibilities are presented here.

Knowledge of Belief Systems

One way in which young adults can benefit from reading literature with spiritual themes is through an enlarged understanding of religious beliefs. The often compelling and action-packed offerings of many writers can grab and hold the younger reader long enough to interest him in unfamiliar countries and religions. In addition, the characters make beliefs and practices real, more immediate to the reader. In Pamela Service's *The Reluctant God*, for example, the main character is Ameni, an adolescent ancient Egyptian whom modern, fourteen-year-old Lorna awakens 4000 years after his death. Ameni was entombed at an early age because he became a god upon his father's death and was thus sacrificed to guard the ancient Egyptian dead. Ameni had quite a nice life before becoming a god, and was not thrilled at the prospect of dying so young nor at gallivanting around England with Lorna, 4000 years later, looking for a stolen urn. Service's writing pulls the reader into Ameni's reluctance, his search for the urn, and his experiences in both ancient and modern Egypt. The story also conveys basic information about the Ancient Egyptians and their spiritual beliefs and shows how concern for the dead is a point of contact among many belief systems.

A young adult novel that explains basic Buddhism while solving a mystery and pointing out the peculiar problems and joys of the life of a military family is Carol Farley's *Ms. Isabelle Cornell, Herself.* In this book, preteen Isabelle moves to Korea with her family and uses her new-found knowledge of Buddhism to solve a mystery on the military base. The reader experiences the culture shock of Isabelle's unhappy move to Korea, her attempts to navigate in Seoul (both physically and spiritually), and the effect upon her minister stepfather when she declares herself a Buddhist. Her stepfather's reaction points out similarities between Buddhism and Christianity. Meanwhile, the mystery Isabelle is compelled to solve keeps the plot moving.

Three other books that illustrate the daily lives of people subscribing to various belief systems include M. E. Kerr's *Is That You, Miss Blue?*, in which Christian boarding school students witness the persecution of a teacher who believes she has communicated with Jesus; Suzanne Fisher Staples' *Shabanu, Daughter of the Wind*, in which readers learn about young Shabanu's experience in rebelling against her Moslem/Pakistani heritage; and Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, in which the friendship of two young Jewish boys is severely tested as they grow into young men because of their families' different interpretations of Judaism.

Another benefit of these novels is that they provide young adults with points of contact between religion and history. Religious beliefs fueled many events we now consider to be of major historical importance, and students need background on world religions to understand history. Even history-in-the-making requires a basic understanding of belief systems for intelligent response. A good example of a young adult book that illustrates this connection between religion and recent history is Sonia Levitin's *The Return*. In *The Return*, an Ethiopian Jew named Desta, persecuted in her own country, makes a long and dangerous trek to a camp in Sudan as the first leg of her journey to Israel. Desta, already an orphan, loses her older brother during the journey and has to grow up fast as she becomes responsible for her younger sister, Almaz. She later joins a group of friends (including the boy she is betrothed to) and finishes the journey to Sudan. However, they nearly die of starvation and thirst on the way to the camp because famine has come to the area. In the final chapter, Desta arrives at the Western Wall and compares herself to "the captives who returned from Babylon to reclaim Jerusalem once again as their home" (Levitin, p. 177). She feels she, too, has returned.

The Quest for Spiritual Knowledge

Another common thread in spiritual literature is that of the quest for spiritual knowledge or the spiritual journey. Many of the characters in young adult books journey in search of knowledge of good and evil, of the self, and of the meaning and mysteries of life. In *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey* by Jamake Highwater, Anpao sets out to find his father, the sun, to ask his permission to marry. During his long journey, Anpao hears stories of the origin of the world and of its many creatures and strange phenomena. He becomes a man through his journey because he learns to see how good and evil exist in all things, including himself. The journey ultimately becomes so important to him that Anpao says, "I have become my journey and my journey has become me. Without it I am nothing. When I pause I forget who I am or why I exist" (Highwater, p. 123).

Another book in which the character and the journey merge is Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*, a book many remember from their own young adult days. It is the story of Siddhartha's lifelong search for knowledge about himself and the meaning of life, as well as his quest for spiritual peace and for the source of reality. Siddhartha wants to begin his quest because he feels he already possesses all of the knowledge his community can give him. However, Siddhartha's father will not approve of Siddhartha's plans. Siddhartha thus attempts to overcome his father's authority through sheer obstinence in a scene that will strike chords of recognition in many readers, both young adult and adult. After wearing his father down, Siddhartha begins a physical and spiritual journey that takes him from religious fanaticism to material and sensual depravity and ultimately to the knowledge he seeks. *Siddhartha* has been a landmark novel for generations of young adults and will probably continue to be so for generations to come.

Two other books concerned with spiritual journeys are *Walkabout* by James Vance Marshall and *The Island* by Gary Paulsen. In *Walkabout*, two American children stranded in the Australian Outback meet a bush boy who is on a spiritual quest for manhood. The bush boy helps the children, but by doing so allows the children to inadvertently endanger his journey to manhood. In Paulsen's *The Island*, fourteen-year-old Wil finds (or is found by) an uninhabited island in Wisconsin that becomes his spiritual home. On the island he meditates, writes, paints, and seeks *to know*. But his unconventional search for knowledge makes many people, such as his parents, uncomfortable because they just cannot see the value in Wil's pursuits, nor in his connection to the island.

The importance of the young adult journey, in both fiction and life, is not the destination but the experiences of the journey, the experiences that can make us human, understanding, and wise. The pilgrims in young adult literature show readers that if they fix their eyes on the goal, they might miss the journey, and forget, as Anpao says, who they are or why they exist.

Identity Definition in Relation to Spirituality

Young adults, in defining themselves, choose from the myriad beliefs available those beliefs that contribute to the identities they mold, identities that differentiate them from the rest of the seemingly monolithic adult world. The struggle to differentiate, to avoid conformity and develop individual identity, should be a struggle in which they recognize their uniqueness but in which they also discover how values and beliefs are shared by humans all over the world. For example, a student might realize that various explanations for the origin of the world, although dissimilar at first glance, show a common core of values: the preference for good acts over evil acts, for example, and the importance of spiritual growth. It is the young adult's task to choose those beliefs whose answers most satisfy her.

Rudolfo Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima* exemplifies this notion of a variety of beliefs but with common values, from which six-year-old Tony must choose his own path to salvation. Should he believe in the old magic of Ultima, the *curandera*, the Catholic faith of his mother, or *la gente's* legend of the golden carp? This notion of choice as the foundation of identity is echoed in his options for his future: a farmer-priest as his mother, a Luna, desires; a *vaquero* as his father, a Marez, desires; or a scholar, as Ultima the *curandera*, seems to see as his future. It is Tony's task to assess the possibilities and decide for himself what he will adopt as his own set of beliefs.

Another book in which the main character searches for his own answers is *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach. Jonathan is in search of the right way for him, for the beliefs that most fit with his vision of life, a vision in which perfect knowledge of flight is the highest goal. Jonathan leaves behind the rest of the seagull crowd but gains paradise and transcendence. Two particularly appealing aspect of Bach's book are its search for principles around which to build a life and its main character, Jonathan, who is a bird and, therefore, not a member of any established religion. In addition, the book is simple enough for the most immature young adult, yet at the same time conceptually dense enough to satisfy more mature readers.

A final example of young adult literature showing young adults making spiritual choices as a foundation for adult identity is Katherine Paterson's *Jacob Have I Loved*. In this novel, the narrator, Sarah Louise, enters adolescence and plunges into turmoil, blaming her beautiful, talented twin sister Caroline and the Bible verse about the twins Jacob and Esau (Romans 9:13, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated") for her bitterness. Her rage, however, finally spurs her into building herself "a soul" (Paterson, p. 228) and a life of her own. To develop a life of one's own is the task of young adulthood, and *Jacob Have I Loved* portrays that struggle with insight and compassion.

Conclusion

Many young adults are truly in crisis during the passage into adulthood for a variety of reasons. In addition, many young adults are dealing with new understandings of concepts such as death, their own mortality, spiritual transcendence, and the soul. Young adulthood can be a time of loneliness, emotional turmoil, and confusion. However, it can also be a time of spiritual growth, introspection, and values clarification, especially when young adults can exercise their capabilities for formal operational thought through spiritual themes in young adult literature. Through such literature, their experiences are enhanced by exposure to information about various belief systems and the humans who subscribe to them, to characters in search of spiritual understanding or knowledge, and to characters integrating various beliefs into their emerging adult identities. All too soon, the crises of adulthood will be upon today's young adults; they need now to begin building the spiritual foundations that will sustain them through the uncertain future.

A Selection of Young Adult Books with Spiritual Themes: An Annotated Bibliography

☐ **Anaya, Rudolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima.* Berkeley: TQS, 1972.**
A very young Chicano boy becomes a man as he searches for the true source of salvation and questions the destinies his parents dream of for him.

☐ **Bach, Richard. *Jonathan Livingston Seagull.* Avon, 1970.**
A seagull strives for perfect knowledge of flight. He finds paradise, becomes a teacher of others, and learns to transcend both space and time.

☐ **Coatsworth, Elizabeth. *The Cat Who Went to Heaven.* Aladdin/Macmillan, 1990.**
A Japanese artist is convinced by his cat's example to include the cat in a painting of Buddha and the animal reincarnations he experienced.

☐ **Craven, Margaret. *I Heard the Owl Call My Name.* Dell, 1973.**
A young Catholic priest, who does not know he will soon die, discovers the spirituality and sadness of a dwindling group of Native Americans in the Northwest. Before he dies, he learns what life is about.

☐ **Farley, Carol. *Ms. Isabelle Cornell, Herself.* Atheneum, 1980.**
A preteen experiences a minister stepfather, Korea, and Buddhism, and solves a mystery.

☐ **Hesse, Hermann. *Siddhartha.* New Directions, 1951.**
The classic story of the young Siddhartha's quest for spiritual wisdom.

☐ **Highwater, Jamake. *Anpao: An American Indian Odyssey.* Lippincott, 1977.**
Anpao, son of the Sun, sets out to find his father so that he can get permission to marry his true love. On his way he hears stories of the origin of the world, of its creatures, and of strange phenomena, and has many adventures. On his return he encounters the damage done by the arrival of new peoples in his lands.

☐ **Kerr, M.E. *Is That You, Miss Blue?* Dell, 1975.**
Those in charge of a girls' parochial boarding school persecute anyone different: poor students, atheists, and a teacher who has a strong faith and believes she has communicated with Jesus.

☐ **Levitin, Sonia. *The Return.* Fawcett Juniper, 1978.**
Desta, a young Ethiopian Jew, leaves her home because of religious persecution and journeys to a camp in Sudan in hopes of making it to Israel.

☐ **Marshall, James Vance. *Walkabout.* Sundance, 1959.**
Two American children stranded in the Australian Outback meet a bush boy who ultimately dies because the children circumvent his spiritual quest for manhood.

☐ **Paterson, Katherine.** ***Jacob Have I Loved.*** **Harper Trophy, 1980.**
A young girl feels always second to her sister, like the twins Jacob and Esau of the Bible. She feels God despises her for no reason and makes her life go sour, but before she is completely lost to bitterness she begins to forge a new identity and life.

☐ **Paulsen, Gary.** ***The Island.*** **Dell, 1988.**
Wil finds an island that becomes a spiritual home for him. On the island he can meditate, write, and paint. But his living on the island makes some people uncomfortable.

☐ **Potok, Chaim.** ***The Chosen.*** **Simon and Schuster, 1967.**
Two teenage boys, one Orthodox and the other Hassidic, meet when one tries to kill the other with a baseball. They develop a deep and abiding friendship that is put to several difficult tests.

☐ **Rylant, Cynthia.** ***Missing May.*** **Dell Yearling, 1992.**
May dies and Ob misses her so much that he considers trying to contact her. Instead, he makes contact with those around him.

☐ **______.** ***A Fine White Dust.*** **Dell Yearling, 1986.**
Pete is saved by a drifting revivalist preacher and decides God has called him to bring the word of God to others. But Pete's faith is tested.

☐ **Service, Pamela.** ***The Reluctant God.*** **Atheneum, 1988.**
Lorna wakens Ameni, who has been asleep in his tomb for 4000 years, and together they try to recover an artifact which guarantees eternal rest for ancient Egyptians.

☐ **Staples, Suzanne Fisher.** ***Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind.*** **Knopf/Borzoi Sprinters, 1989.**
Twelve-year-old Shabanu would rather take care of the camels than marry, especially when circumstances force her to marry a man 20 or more years her senior. But the norms of her Pakistani/Moslem culture dictate that she submit.

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Core Unit 3
Adolescent/Young Adult Literature and Issues of Diversity

Adolescence is a time when an eleven or twelve-year-old embarks upon a complete transformation of mind and body that spans the next 5 or 6 years. With this transformation comes a host of seemingly new experiences, but more truthfully, adolescents experience varying degrees of similar challenges. "Adolescence is a period of transitions" (Steinberg, 1996, 4). All children normally pass through preprogrammed genetic sequences that produce certain physiological, intellectual, and attitudinal changes at specific stages. During the course of these changes, adolescents worry about their appearances, whether or not they fit in social situations, being different enough to have a sense of identity yet not too much unlike other youth, loyalty to family and culture, society's expectations, and budding sexuality.

During adolescence, cognitive and physical changes enable most students who are in middle and high school to think outside of themselves. "The adolescent's greater facility with abstract thinking [also] permits the application of advanced reasoning and logical processes to social and ideological matters" (Steinber, 1996, 66). In other words, young people are quite ready to engage in the kind of thinking that is crucial for developing the social and the moral consciousness that is necessary to embrace diversity and counter the fear and ignorance of other cultures that lead to overt racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. Adolescent literature can provide the vicarious experiences that help adolescents understand the complex issues and responsibilities associated with global citizenship.

Adolescent literature is an ideal vehicle for discussion of those adolescent concerns. This literature can present the shared experiences of adolescents across the world, who are more alike than different in experiences and expectations. It can expand the visions of adolescents to embrace people who differ from current neighbors and friends. Adolescent literature can help develop the knowledge and metacognitive abilities needed to reduce the ignorance that feeds racism, bias, and hatred of those who are outwardly perceived as different.

In *Children of the River* by Linda Crew, the all-American boy and the good Cambodian girl endure a painful realization that their cultures have very different views about relationships. *Baby Be-bop* by Francesca Block, centers around sexual identification and identity of a young good looking athlete who doesn't understand why he isn't aroused by girls. *The Crossing* by Gary Paulsen addresses a 14-year-old Mexican boy's uncertainty about life and painful quest for a place to call home. Richard Wright's *Rite of Passage* is a short novel that creates an interesting parallel to *The Crossing* because the protagonist is an African American male who is displaced from a home that he loves. In *Shizuko's Daughter* by Kyoko Mori, a young Japanese girl learns to accept herself and others after her mother's suicide leaves her feeling alone. The stories of these young people's lives express the commonalties that adolescents may share, and there are hundreds of titles like these, some classics and others more current, that can be used for teaching the common experiences of different people.

Teaching diversity to adolescents may be a challenge in some districts where schools have not taken the initiative to infuse diversity into the curriculum beyond the recognition of certain holidays or classroom displays of minority achievements. All young people deserve the opportunity to be successful in a school that recognizes the important contributions of diverse groups of people and the richness their experiences bring to a classroom. Admittedly, there is no simple plan that makes infusing diversity easy, and recognizing every single aspect of diversity would be impossible. However, the abundant and ever growing collection of young adult literature titles are very useful tools in the quest to meet the challenge to embrace and to learn about minority populations in American schools. Posting a few pictures, reading minority classics, and recognizing holidays are no longer sufficient for the master teacher who recognizes the importance of valuing all students regardless of their ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or other factors that make them different.

"A new era in immigration is bringing peoples from areas of the world and cultural backgrounds significantly different from previous immigration patterns with greater growth rates among people of color in the general populations and especially among student enrollments in schools" (Gay,1992, 3). According to demographic projections reported by the US Census Bureau in 1990, 1 million Native Americans, 8 million Asian and Pacific Islanders, 13 million African Americans, and 24 million Hispanics will be added to the United States population within the next 25 years. The Census Bureau predicts major increases in the minority populations for all states, partially the result of more mobile families who seek education and employment opportunities. Therefore, teaching diversity to adolescents is not a trend in education is not likely to diminish. Even the most currently isolated adolescent is likely to encounter diversity as a result of employment, travel, relocation, marriages among relatives, and community changes.

Ultimately, the goal of teaching diversity is the development of a civic consciousness that equips young people with the capacity to respond knowledgeably in diverse situations that involve people from other nations, genders, religions, ethnicities, and cultures. Young adult literature helps attain this goal by transcending land and time barriers to create windows into the lives of others. Good multicultural stories can aid adolescent development imaginatively transforming the buried life of a narrow egocentrism into a broader and more meaningful life connected to the world of other people (Scharwz, 1994). Teachers can move students outside of themselves and their "narrow" view of the world and help them realize that serious dilemmas in their lives are not exclusively theirs.

There are many ways a teacher can identify. Consulting other teachers, reading current journal articles, perusing young adult books sections in bookstores, calling minority associations, and checking with reference librarians are a few avenues to start your search. A number of resources use terms like multicultural education, cultural diversity, ethnic studies, and so on as synonomous terms for diversity, which simply means different. Multicultural and like terms that include the word culture are most often associated with artifacts. Teaching diversity involves much more. "There is little doubt that if substantial changes are to be made so that all racial and ethnic groups are treated equitably, every person involved with educating children must take an active role in the process" (Byrnes, 1992).

Ideally, whole school curriculum should already show evidence of diversity, but many classroom teachers face the real challenge of selecting the appropriate materials for their students when diversity is not infused into existing curriculum. Teachers can expect to encounter a number of issues when selecting these materials. For example, consider gender topics-- including those of lesbian and gay adolescents. Students are well aware of instances involving young male and female students who didn't fit well into generalized schemas of how a girl or boy should behave. These "different" students are ostracized and ridiculed because homophobia is deeply entrenched in our culture. Yet, teachers know that gay and lesbian adolescents attend classes right along side of the so-called "straights."

Sometimes a few of these young people are able to build a niche of acceptance if they have special or popular talents, but what happens to the gay or lesbian adolescent who is merely ordinary? According to a Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network bulletin, "[O]ne out of every three gay teens attempt suicide during adolescence." Does not the sanctity of life merit some attention to the similar dilemmas that these young people face? Adolescent literature can allow students to step back and take an objective look at young males and females who question their sexual orientations. Adolescence is a time when all young people need acceptance, guidance, support, and understanding regardless of their sexual proclivities. "[T]he developmental tasks in the domains of identity, intimacy, and sexuality present formidable challenges for many teenagers. These challenges may be exacerbated for gay and lesbian adolescents, who may be forced to resolve these issues without the same degree of social support as their heterosexual peers" (Steinberg, 1996, 426). In exploring literature involving same sex relationships, teachers can focus on what these young people have in common with their peers. Sometimes gay and lesbian adolescents are terrific athletes, dancers, writers, and all around whiz kids, but they are always human and subject to those passions, aspirations, and hopes that rage within us all.

Three journal articles are included in this module. "Multicultural Literacy: Mental Scripts for Elementary, Secondary, and College Teacher" (Walters, 1994) presents four categories of socialized perspective. Teachers who teach diversity to adolescents should think about their own perceptions and have a good understanding of possible barriers that may undermine infusion goals. Intentional or unintentional subtleties of racism pervade every aspect of curriculum--textbook and tools. Further, Walters discusses and advocates a truthful deep structure infusion which she believes will result "from socialization and education processes which are contextual, holistic, thematic, and rooted in the influencing domains derived from multidimensional scholarship" (Walters, 1994,51).

Stover (1991), in "Exploring and Celebrating Cultural Diversity and Similarity Through Young Adult Novels," discusses four reasons why literature programs should reflect cultural diversity. Although she mentions that young adult novels reflect the "culturally diverse experience," one should remember that the overarching emotions--fear, excitement, love, intrepidation, sadness, and hope are universal for all adolescents. She cites the importance of "building a future citizenry that understands the diversity of the American society and that validates the experience of all our young adults" (Stover, 1991, 14).

The last article by St. Clair (1995), "Outside Looking In: Representations of Gay and Lesbian Experiences in the Young Adult Novel" explores the controversial issue of homosexuality. She expresses a concern about the derth of positive homosexual characters who have central roles in young adult novels. She believes that have an obligation to provide gay students with the same resources as we do other minority students. St. Clair also includes brief but favorable discussions about *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Green and *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence* by Marion Dame Bauer.

Works Cited

Byrnes, Deborah, 1992. Addressing race, ethnicity and culture in the Classroom." In *Common Bonds:Anti-Bias Teaching in a Diverse Society*. Deborah A. Byrnes and Gary Kiger, eds. Association for Childhood Education International, 1992.

Steinberg, Laurence. *Adolescence 4th ed*. McGraw-Hill, 1996.

Schwarz, Gretchen, (1995) Growing up, reaching out: Multiculturalism through young adult literature and films." *ALAN Review*, Spring 95.

Additional Recommended Resources

Reissman, Rose, (1994). *The Evolving Multicultural Classroom.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Timm, Joan Thrower, (1996) *Four Perspectives in Multicultural Education*. Wadsworth Publishing Company

Module Readings and Focus Questions

Stover, Lois. (1991) Exploring and celebrating cultural diversity through young adult novels. *ALAN Review*, vol. 19, no 3.

1. How does your understanding of the need for culturally diverse literature compare and contrast to that of Stover's.
2. "Students from the traditionally prevailing culture need to confront their own values." How will students in your classroom benefit from exposure to other cultures?
3. Even within the dominant culture, other cultures exist. How many aspects of cultural differences are present within your own school or community?

Walters, Toni, (1994). Multicultural literacy: Mental scripts for elementary, secondary and college teachers. *Equity & Excellence in Education* V27, no. 1.

1. Taking into consideration the socialized perspectives according to Walters, which may apply to your or your local school's curriculum?
2. Subtle biases exist in every aspect of instruction for many American schools, what are some strategies that you can develop for minimizing such biases?
3. Discuss whether or not you are convinced of Walters's strong emphasis on infusion.

St. Clair, Nancy, (1995). Outside looking In: Representations of gay and lesbian experiences in the young adult novel. *ALAN Review*, vol 23, no. 1.

1. Why does St. Clair cite a need for the realistic protrayal of gay and lesbian characters in young adult literature?
2. Of the novels with homosexual characters that you've read, discuss in which one of St. Clair's three you'd place it.
3. How would you justify using a novel with homosexual characters to school stakeholders—parents, community, students, colleagues, etc.?

Suggested Titles for Issues in Diversity

Bauer, Marion Dane, ed. *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence.* New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

A collection of stories about the experiences of gay and lesbian adolescents.

Bennett, James. *Dakota Dream*. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1994.

A male runaway goes to a Dakota reservation in search of himself and a culture to call his own.

Block, Francesca. *Baby Bebop*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

A young athlete searches for an identity that masks his sexual orientation, he reconciles within himself about his homosexuality after receiving spiritual visions.

Cisneros, Sandra. *House on Mango Street*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

A young Hispanic girl reflects her growing up times in Chicago.

Crew, Linda. *Children of the River*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1987.

An all-American boy and a good Cambodian girl endure the painful realization that their cultures have different expectations about relationships.

Fricke, Aaron. *Reflections of a Rock Lobster.* Alyson Publications, Dept. J-55, 40 Plympton Street, Boston, MA 02118.
A gay male gains national attention when he sues to take a date of his choice to the high school prom.

Garland, Sherry. *Song of the Buffalo Boy.* New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1992.
An outcast Amerasian girl longs to marry a Vietnamese boy and hopes to find her American father in the U.S.

Jones, Carla. *Mommy, Where Do Black People Come From*? *Jones Publishing, P.O. Box 68135, Indpls, IN 46268, (317) 547-9386.
Afrocentric story about the origin of Black people.

Laird, Elizabeth. *Kiss the Dust.* New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1991.
A young Iraqi female and her family flee to Iran uncertain about the whereabouts of her father who is with the Kurdish resistance movement.

Naylor, Gloria. *The Women of Brewster Place.* New York: Penguin Books USA INC., 1982.
A story of the strength and struggles of four African-American women.

Paulsen, Gary. *The Crossing.* . New York: Dell Publishing, 1987.
A homeless Mexican Boy desires to cross the United States border in search of opportunity

Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson.* New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1990.
A brother and sister are at odds over a beautifully handcrafted piano--legacy of the past and hope for the future.

Wright, Richard. *Rite of Passage.* New York: HarperCollins, 1994.
An African American male tires to adjust to life on the streets when the social agency designed to help him victimizes him instead

Yolen, Jane. *The Devil's Arithmetic.* New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1988.
A young jewish female shuns her family traditions until she is transported back in time to experience the Holocaust

In addition to these titles, Schwarz (1995) provides several annotated suggestions of young adult literature which addresses issues of diversity and racisim. Among these are:

- *Chernowitz* by Fran Arrick (Signet, 1983). Explores antisemitism in middle America as a school bully persecutes Bobby Cherno while his friends look on.

- *The Return by Sonia Levitin* (Fawcett Juniper, 1987). Describes the escape of a black Jewish girl, Desta, from Ethiopia during Operation Moses, which saved 8000 refugees in a secret airlift from Sudan to Israel in 1984-85.

* *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor (Bantam, 1976). Cassie and her family maintain dignity and purpose while suffering from racism in the segregated South in the 1930s.

* *Upon the Head of the Goat* by Aranka Siegel (Puffin, 1994). Piri, a 13-year-old Hungarian Jew, narrates this true story of racism and its effects in Hungary, 1939-1944, before her final trip to the concentration camps.

* *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry (Dell, 1989). Living in 1943 in Copenhagen, Annemarie risks her life as her Danish family helps Jews escape the Nazis.

* *Maus I* by Art Spiegelman (Pantheon, 1986). In another medium used to recount the Holocaust – comic books – with the Jews as mice and the Nazis as cats, this compelling story is based on the author's family history. (Maus II follows this story.)

* *The Road from Home* by David Kherdian (Puffin, 1979). Veron Dumehjian is forced from her comfortable, close-knit home as the Turkish extermination of the Armenians proceeds in 1915. Based on Kherdian's mother's life.

* *Wandering Girl* by Glenyse Ward (Fawcett Juniper, 1988). In Australia in 1965 virtual slavery for Aboriginal women still exists on white farms. Autobiography.

* *Zlata's Diary* by Zlata Filopovic. (Viking, 1994). This best-selling diary of a lively, thoughtful young girl reveals costs of racism and ethnic cleansing in the present, as Sarajevo is reduced to the Dark Ages.

Assignment Options

1. Write a 5 - 7 page paper using *Reflections of a Rock Lobster*, *Baby Be-Bop* or another appropriate title negotiated with your instructor to analyze the representation of the homosexual experience according to the three catagories discussed in the Walters article.

2. Write a 5 - 7 page analysis of the several current young adult literature selections used at a local school. Make reference to the St. Clair article as you address selection inclusions, language, perceived audience, etc.

3. Use one of the articles listed below as a guide to titles about young adult literature addressing particular ethnic groups. Read one of these articles and at least two titles suggested in the article you select. Write a brief summary of the titles you read addressing the ideas presented in the Stover article included with this packet.

Articles:

Hirschfelder,-Arlene-B., Native American Literature for Children and Young Adults., 1993 *Library-Trends*; v41 n3 p414-36 Win 1993
AB: Addresses the importance and features of Native American oral literature, discusses the heightened interest of publishers in producing books with Native American stories for children, and describes problems in many of these works. Issues of authenticity are discussed, and examples of nonfiction and fiction works that provide accurate information are given. (Contains 88 references.)

Pugh,-Sharon-L.; Garcia,-Jesus, Multicultural Trade Books for Adolescents: A Definition and Sampler., 1992 *Social-Education*; v56 n5 p303-07 Sep 1992
AB: Describes multicultural trade books for adolescent readers. Defines multiculturalism, diversity, and global dimensions. Discusses four books that address the problems of biculturalism for American Indian youth, interracial dating and marriage, sexual and racial diversity in different occupations, and women's lives in the developing nations.

Schon,-Isabel, Latinos/as and Families: Books to Enhance Reading Togetherness.: 1995 *Reading-Teacher*; v48 n7 p636-38 Apr 1995
AB: Present brief annotations of 19 books for children and adolescents that present Latino children or adolescents and their families experiencing life, celebrating special occasions, or dealing with difficult situations.

Smith,-Karen-Patricia, The Multicultural Ethic and Connections to Literature for Children and Young Adults., 1993 *Library-Trends*; v41 n3 p340-53 Win 1993
AB: Discusses the concept of multiculturalism and its relationship to literature for children and young adults. Specific issues in multicultural children's literature are examined, including exclusivity, stereotyping, and availability of resources; responses to the need for multicultural literature are described; and multicultural children's literature publications, awards, and conferences are reviewed. (Contains 24 references.)

4. Visit the local book stores to compile a top ten list of titles in diversity issues recommended by children's literature salesperson; develop a rating system for primary, elementary/middle school and high school teacher and write a paragraph summary for each one. Exchange lists with 2 other students and discuss findings via telephone or electronic mail conference. Submit a 1 page summary of your conference.

5. Choose 2 titles from Stover, St. Clair, or Walters articles and 2 titles of your choice to read. Write a 2 - 3 page informative paper that includes a summary and type of rating for each book, suggestions for the teacher who may use it, and recommendations to students who may read it.

6. Use 2 titles from module reading list and 2 titles suggested by a student, teacher, community organization, or bookstore that explore issues in diversity: religion, gender, race, and language (includes vocabulary). Meet with 3 other students face to face or via e-mail or telephone conference for reading discussion. Compile list of titles with summaries from your conference and submit to instructor.

7. Find 6 websites: journals, booklists, history, fine arts, minority organizations, and schools that relate to issues of diversity and submit to instructor. Include a brief paragraph introduction for each site. advantages/shortcomings of each website.

①

Lois Stover

EXPLORING AND CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SIMILARITY THROUGH YOUNG ADULT NOVELS

After middle school students from rural Carroll County, Maryland, read a Russian young adult novel *Shadows across the Sun* in teacher Rita Karr's English class, they examined their earlier journal entries where they had brainstormed about what they would anticipate daily life would be like in the U.S.S.R. Reflecting on what they would change in those entries, made before they read the novel, they made comments such as, "It doesn't seem as strict as I thought it was," or "I'd write now how they're similar to us." Sam's reflection captures what many students felt:

> I'd change the part about "I'd probably die" because reading the book. I see that it's not that hard to adjust to the Russian way of life, especially with friends like Fedya and Lena.

In fact, it probably would be hard for American young adults to adjust to such a different way of life; however, what their responses say is that they have a willingness to focus on the commonalities of the adolescent experience while examining, and perhaps even celebrating, the differences resulting from growing up in different environments.

Patricia Ann Romero and Dan Zancanella begin a recent article in the *English Journal*, "Expanding the Circle: Hispanic Voices in American Literature," with the following paragraph:

> The new Prenctice Hall American literature textbook, *The American Experience* (1989), is imposing . . . . Weighing in at what must be almost fifteen pounds, its sheer size holds the promise that its covers enclose the whole of literary America. The advertisements for the series tell us that '3,000 teachers nationwide acclaim what is at the heart of the program — our remarkable collection of literature.' Yet only twelve of the 1,399 pages in the text (less than 1%) are devoted to works by writers with Hispanic surnames (the nature writer Barry Holstun Lopez and the Filipino poet Jose Garcia Villa), and not a single page is devoted to literature about Hispanic experience in the United States. The contents of American-literature anthologies offered by Scribner's, Scott-Foresman, and other well-known publishers include little more. (p. 24)

Projections for "minority" enrollments in public school classrooms for the year 2000 range anywhere from 35% to more than 50% of the total school population. Given the number of students in our classrooms who come from cultural backgrounds other than the white, Anglo-Saxon world, I am concerned when I realize, as Romero and Zancanella point out, that we do little throughout the literature program to celebrate the riches of our diverse cultural heritage. As the Maryland middle school students show, literature has the power to broaden perspectives.

Why should the literature program reflect cultural diversity? It seems to me that there are at least four reasons.

All readers need to connect in a personal way with the literature they read. Talking with future teachers at the University of Virginia, Houston Baker painted a vivid image of black students in literature and social studies classes pulling their jackets over their heads and going to sleep when units such as "The American Frontier" are introduced. Such a topic and the literature related to it are not perceived as relevant by students from many of the cultural backgrounds present in classrooms when the literature presented reflects only the experience of western European settlers. Romero and Zancanella cite the need for indigenous literature: "Indigenous literature — that which arises from the students' own culture and locale — allows readers to make powerful connections to works that draw on what they already know and to validate the importance of that knowledge" (p. 27).

Marie Steuart Frankson also cites the need to include literature reflective of the experience of students representative of various cultural backgrounds: "To develop a positive image of their roles as valuable members of society, minority youth need to see themselves represented in good literature, both in their classrooms and on the library shelves" (p. 30). For instance, novels such as Eleanora Tate's *The Secret of Gumbo Grove* (1987) or Rosa Guy's *The Ups and Downs of Carl Davis III* (1989) describe engaging black characters who are dealing with everyday pressures faced by most young adults. Native American adolescents might relate more readily to the struggles of the main characters in N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* (1968) who are trying to determine a sense of identity while caught between the traditions of their tribal roots and the values of the materialistic, mainstream society than they would relate to books by Paul Zindel or Judy Blume. And young adults who have only recently arrived in the U.S. could find it easier to relate to novels about the immigration experience, the experience of being a "stranger in a strange land," than they would to the works which typically dominate the literature curriculum. Providing students who have recently immigrated to the U.S. with novels such as *A Long Way from Home* (Wartski, 1980) about moving from Vietnam to the U.S. or *A Jar of Dreams* (Uchida, 1982) about arriving from Japan onto American shores would remind them that they are not alone, that others have survived similar experiences.

Students from all cultural backgrounds should learn about

alternative perspectives and values. In order to be comfortable in an increasingly culturally diverse society, students from the traditionally prevailing culture need to confront their own values. They also need to learn about alternative perspectives and develop the tolerance and appreciation for peoples whose backgrounds are different from their own. One way to do so is through literature drawn from those cultures; we need to provide access to such literature for students not only in schools with a student body of diverse cultural backgrounds but also for students going through school systems in which such diversity is limited. Otherwise, as Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1983) notes in an essay, "Contingencies of Value," we "obviate the possible acknowledgement of divergent systems of value" and tell students that there is only one literature — and culture — that is of value (p. 7).

Thus, teachers and librarians should provide students with books which will introduce them to diverse cultural experiences and should discuss with students the similarities and differences among those cultures. For example, the students who read *Shadows across the Sun* created these lists to compare and contrast life in the U.S.S.R. with life in the U.S.

U.S.S.R.

Lower incomes
No satire
Shopping is different
Like poetry
Different treatment of handicapped people
Different foods
Bilingual schools
Wear uniforms
School more regimented

Similarities

Families — divorce, arguments, alcoholism
School and home work
Sibling fights
Problems with parents
Music important
Respect for leaders, teachers
Fall in love — similar feelings
Like sports/sports important
Have pets
Have class clowns
Like warm weather

U.S.

Racial differences
More movement possible
More freedoms
Less rigid procedures
Different music
More choice in clothing
Travel is easier
More career choices
Computers in the home
More cars
Sports are different

Students' responses indicate that it is possible to use young adult literature from other countries as a tool in helping students to broaden their perspective, to move out of an egocentric mode of thinking. Their lists provide insight about possible discussion topics teachers could initiate with students which would allow for exploration of points of connection and divergence among various cultural experiences such as the following:

- *Similarities to Investigate* (concerns shared by adolescents which cross cultural boundaries)
  - Changing relationships with parents
  - Dealing with the physiological changes brought about by adolescence
  - Developing positive relationships with the opposite sex
  - Defining oneself outside the realm of the family
  - Establishing a personal system of ethical, moral, philosophical, and religious beliefs
  - Preparing for the future
  - Forging a niche in the larger society
- *Differences to Explore* (differences in daily life and in ways of dealing with the world created by differences of the cultural context in which the individual lives)
  - School systems
  - Role of the state in the life of the individual
  - Role of technology in daily life
  - Perceptions of what "family" means
  - Roles of women and children in families and society
  - Differences in religious practice and belief
  - Differences in perceptions of history and historical events
  - Routines of daily life
  - Perceptions of time
  - Perceptions of humor

Understand the relationship between art and the cultural context in which it is produced.

Readers need experiences with literature reflective of many cultures in order to develop an understanding of the relationship between art and the culture out of which it grows. If we continue to examine only one culture and its literature throughout the literature program — that of the western European world — we do not provide students enough information for them to truly come to understand the relationship between art and the cultural context in which it is produced. Students will not have enough experience to appreciate that literature and culture are inextricably intertwined unless they have read diverse literature reflective of varied cultural contexts. Thus, students should read novels such as Jamake Highwater's *Ceremony of Innocence* (1985) about the Native American experience and contrast the use of language, the sense of story, and the values expressed through that story with novels such as Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* (1988), a novel about growing up as an Hispanic-American, and with the novels from other countries such as Nobuku Albery's *Balloon Top* (1978) and Nagai Kafu's *The River Sumida* (1965), both from Japan, or even with Jan Mark's *Handles* (1985), which includes a glossary of British "English" for American readers.

Young adult novels reflective of culturally diverse experience do exist in reasonable numbers. There is today an extensive array of young adult novels available to teachers and students which present diverse perspectives. Novels for adolescents exist by authors who grew to adulthood within minority cultures in the U.S. and who write about those experiences — Black, Hispanic, Eskimo, American Indian, Amish, Appalachian. Virginia Hamilton's *A White Romance* (1987), for example, can cause middle-class, white readers some discomfort as they confront, possibly for the first time, how some of the black characters stereotype whites and their behaviors. Max Martinez's *Schoolland: A Novel* (1988) introduces readers to what it means to be an Hispanic American, while books such as those by Highwater capture the conflicts and pressures experienced by adolescents who are Native Americans. Novels for adolescents exist that deal with how it feels to step off a boat or a plane and be transported from one's familiar home culture into an alien one. Such novels document immigrant experience as lived by contemporary young adults from Vietnam, Puerto Rico, Japan, Sweden, or China, whereas others describe what it was like, historically, to arrive as an immigrant and to find that those already established in the U.S. felt prejudices against the culture or country from which the individual had come. All students could profitably study the differences between the immigrant experience as felt by the characters in Yoshika Uchida's *The Samurai of Gold Hill* (1972), which details the prejudice felt by Japanese immigrants to California during the gold rush years, with the experiences of immigrants from Sweden, as in *A Feast of Light* by Gunilla Norris (1967) or those of Nilda in Nicholassa Mohr's *Nilda* (1973), a young girl of Puerto Rican heritage trying to adapt to life in New York City during the early part of this century. And the experiences of these characters, who came to the U.S. of their own volition or following their parents, who had made a conscious choice about immigration, can be contrasted with the experiences of characters in novels such as Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1981), which explores what life was like for those forced to come to the U.S.

Also, novels for and about young adults in other countries are being translated into English and published in the United States, thus offering a way for American students to learn something about the adolescent experience in other lands. Heinemann/Boynton Cook has published many novels reflective of the young adult experience in the Caribbean and Africa by authors such as Michael Anthony, Zee Edgell, Chinua Achebe, or Bessie Head. Young adult novels such as R. Freierman's *The Dingo: A Story of First Love* (1940) or Anatolii Aleskin's *My Brother Plays the Clarinet* (1975) are available in translation from the Russian, while Janine Boissard's books about four sisters and their development over time have been translated from French. *Who Killed Christopher?* by Ivina Korschrunow (1978) is about the pressures of a young man coming of age in modern Germany, and Jan Needle writes powerfully about the interracial tensions that exist for adolescents in contemporary Great Britain in books such as *My Mate Shofiq* (1978).

At the end of this article is a list of novels that teachers might want to stock in their classrooms in an effort to provide an environment of acculturation, one in which students of all backgrounds teach each other, learn and grow together as members of the common culture of the classroom and as individual representatives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. I have chosen to focus on novels, and the occasional collection of short stories, because longer works provide a luxury of time and space for interacting with characters, for getting into their shoes and seeing life from their perspective.

Conclusion

If we offer our students access to literature reflective of many different realms of experience and many diverse points of view, if we attempt to make our classrooms places in which all students find literature to which they can relate because of similarities of experience as well as literature in which they can experience vicariously life from a different perspective, we should be able to increase, at least in a small way, understanding of ourselves, understanding of others, and understanding of how art is reflective of the cultural context in which it is produced.

Discussing the growing shortage of minority teachers in an era of increased numbers of minority students, Edmund J. Farrell (1990) cites a report by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy which notes the adverse effect such a decline has on both minority and majority students:

> The race and background of their teachers tells them something about authority and power in contemporary America. These messages influence children's attitudes toward school, their academic accomplishments, and their views of their own and others' intrinsic worth. The views they form in school about justice and fairness also influence future citizenship. (p. 79)

We may not be able to accomplish significant changes in numbers of minority teachers in the profession overnight. On the other hand, we can change our literature programs to indicate that we value and respect diversity as at least one small step toward building a future citizenry that understands the diversity of the American society and that validates the experience of all of our young adults.

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Frankson, Marie Stewart. "Chicano Literature for Young Adults: An Annotated Bibliography," *English Journal*, January, 1990, pp. 30-35.

Mitchell, Arlene Harris. "Black Adolescent Novels in the Curriculum," *English Journal*, May, 1988, pp. 95-97.

Romero, Patricia Ann, and Dan Zancanella. "Expanding the Circle: Hispanic Voices in American Literature." *English Journal*, January, 1990, pp. 24-29.

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"Stranger in a Strange Land" from the Young Adult's Perspective

These novels describe what it is like to move willingly, as opposed to being forced by another culture to do so, from one country to another and then to adapt to life in the new land.

Bosse, Malcolm. *Ganesh*. Crowell, 1981. (India To U.S.)

Mills, Claudia. *Luisa's American Dream*. Four Winds Press, 1977. (Cuba to New York.)

Mohr, Nicholassa. *Nilda*. Harper and Row, 1973. (Puerto Rico to New York.)

Norris, Gunilla. *A Feast of Light*. Knopf, 1967. (Scandanavia to U.S.)

Ucida, Yoshiko. *A Jar of Dreams*. McElderry, 1982. (Japan to California.)

Uchida, Yoshiko. *The Samurai of Gold Hill*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972. (Japan to U.S.)

Watski, Maureen. *A Long Way from Home*. Signet Vista, 1980. (Vietnam to U.S.)

Young, Alida. *Land of the Iron Dragon*. Doubleday, 1978. (China to U.S.)

Young Adults Representative of Diverse Cultural Groups in the United States

These novels describe life from the perspective of young adults who are descended from peoples a) native to this country before the movement to America by people from Europe; b) forcibly brought to this country by Western European immigrants and their descendants; or c) others outside what is traditionally perceived as the "mainstream" of American society. The list attempts to illustrate just how diverse the cultural mix of peoples living in the United States has been and continues to be; however, works about young people who are part of the traditional mainstream cultures are not included because such books are often already found within the literature program.

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. Pocket Books, 1981. (Black)

Cisneros, Sandra. *The House on Mango Street*. Arte, 1988. (Hispanic)

Guy, Rosa. *The Ups and Downs of Carl Davis III*. Delacorte, 1989. (Black)

Hamilton, Virginia. *A White Romance*. Philomel, 1987. (Black)

Highwater, Jamake. *Ceremony of Innocence*. Harper and Row/Zolotow, 1985. (American Indian — part of a series).

Laskey, Kathryn. *Beyond the Divide*. Macmillan, 1983. (Amish)

Momaday, N. Scott. *House Made of Dawn*. Signet, 1968. (American Indian)

Martinez, Max. *Schoolland: A Novel*. Arte, 1988. (Hispanic)

Peck, Robert Newton. *Arly*. Walker and Co., 1989. (Oppressed farm laborers in rural Florida)

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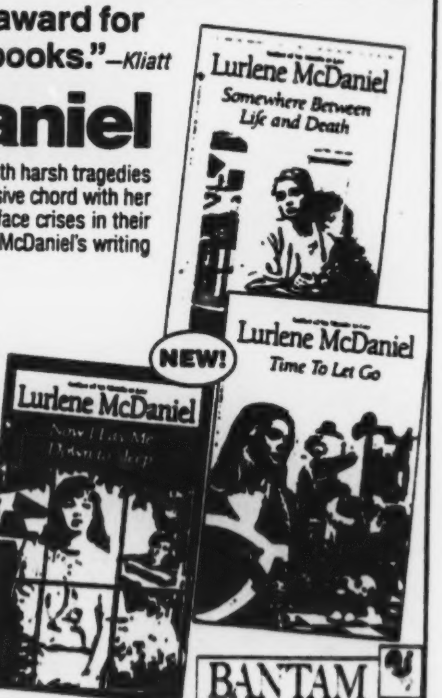

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Multicultural Literacy: Mental Scripts for Elementary, Secondary, and College Teachers

TONI S. WALTERS

Today's schools and our society's future need and must demand ethnically, culturally, and racially diverse literacy for holistic education. This comprehensive literacy develops when the multiple voices of history, the arts, literature, anthropology, sociology, science and mathematics are heard and acknowledged truthfully without hegemony. A truly multicultural literate critical mass can substantially erode the societal obstacles and behaviors created by systemic racism, oppression, and distortion of information. Gloria Anzaldua (1987, p. 87) makes it so clear, "Nothing happens in the real world until it first happens in the images in our heads." It is those inside the head images—the results of how teachers have been socialized and educated—which equip elementary, secondary and college teachers with the frameworks guiding their professional classroom postures. Teachers' perspectives, derived from their values, life experiences, content knowledge and expertise, influence what and how they overtly and passively do what they do in their classrooms.

The purpose of this article is to move beyond the social rhetoric and platitudes of diversity, equal opportunity, and denials of prejudice by addressing how teachers' experiential backgrounds permeate their voiced and unvoiced behaviors. These experiential backgrounds have the potential for creating a classroom pedagogy and program implementation intended to yield academically successful students. My remarks and examples are directed to the teachers who continually seek the seeds of thought to maintain and improve their teaching excellence for all students in our culturally and ethnically diverse society. I believe the realm of such behaviors is the essence of what distinguishes the master, excellent and good teachers from teachers who are mediocre, marginal or poor.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO MULTICULTURALISM

Many of my undergraduate, master, and Ph.D. students in teacher education courses continually validate how important it is for educators in some cases to begin, and in other cases to continue, acquiring multicultural literacy. The comments below, from a veteran teacher and a few preservice teachers, reveal in part the impact their socialization and education have had on them.

Lydia describes herself as "a WASPy, upper-income, education professional, a history major in undergraduate school, an elementary and secondary classroom teacher for ten years, . . . a teacher of future teachers," who "supposedly acquired and mastered knowledge about important theories, practices, and policies which affect the education of our children." She believed she was "colorblind . . . a proponent of equal opportunity . . . compassionate." During the weeks of a multicultural education seminar, her classmates and extensive reading in history, sociology, politics, and pedagogy introduced her to other perspectives that she states "have had a powerful impact on my understanding of the American story. . . . As I continue to develop knowledge and understanding about 'other voices,' my understanding of my role as a teacher will be forever altered." Furthermore, she states that it is

> hard to accept that I was more racist than I had ever thought possible. Equally disturbing . . . was the realization of how this had come to happen. . . . I was angered that as a person . . . about to achieve . . . a significant educational accomplishment, a Ph.D., I had been miseducated and undereducated. . . . I am beginning to understand that by ignoring and suppressing knowledge about other cultures, their perspectives and their contributions, we have created monocultural environments for our students. This "tunnel vision" reinforces stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination and ultimately, racism. (Spring semester, 1992)

In response to an article by Arturo Madrid (1990), entitled "Diversity and its Discontents," one of the required readings in my Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School course, an undergraduate preservice teacher admits she has not been out of her White world circle and therefore "has a narrow view of the real America." She added that Pontiac, Michigan is her "first exposure to Black children." And, when she examined her children's classroom literature she was ". . . appalled at how White it is" (Winter semester, 1992). Another preservice teacher admits that she feels "fortunate to have ended up in the 'predominant' group of our society." She acknowledged she has "never had to deal with feelings of not belonging . . . being looked down upon or prejudged" because of her race (Winter semester, 1992).

Another required reading in this same preservice reading methods course, an article entitled "Rx for Racism: Imperatives for America's Schools," by Pine and Hilliard (1990), prompted another student to state "that White children go through their education without being required to be bicultural, bilingual or bicognitive, while children of color are expected to be bicultural, etc. . . . Hopefully the new generation of teachers will help to change this. It will probably take a very long time though" (Winter semester, 1992). This same article provoked another student to state "Well, excuse me for being White, . . . but I have a real problem with people . . . who preach about what Blacks think and what Whites think. . . . I'll be damned before they [the authors] stereotype me or anyone I know and put words in our mouths and claim false ideals that we supposedly all have" (Winter semester, 1992).

Even though the above comments by students have been abridged (and I would like to believe it was done without distortions), they provide vivid and valid reasons to support a variety of multicultural literacy initiatives within the total school curriculum.

SOCIALIZED PERSPECTIVES

As Medicine Grizzlybear (Lake, 1990, p. 53) eloquently remarked in a letter to his son's teacher, "What you say and do in the classroom, what you teach and how you teach it, and what you don't say and don't teach will have a significant effect on the potential success or failure of my child." Teachers need to understand the nature of what and why they do what they do.

In order to comprehend the effects of the perspectives derived from socialization and education that influence what teachers do with and to students, I have classified teachers' verbal and non-verbal communications into the following four categories: (1) illusion, (2) confusion, (3) selective inclusion, and (4) infusion. While these operational schemata will be expanded on later, understand now that the many examples mentioned, all derived from teachers, are intended to confront the rampant racism cultivated in families, schools, religious institutions, and society at large. Since racism permeates every aspect of our lives, it is ludicrous to attempt to avoid or ignore it. It is important not to confuse racial pride (love of self and others like you) with racist practices (using racial pride to subordinate those not like you).

The psychological effects of racism remain greatly underestimated by those who consciously and unconsciously practice racism in the U. S.; those who practice racism are also victims of White ideology and are impoverished by it (Anzaldua, 1990; Banks, 1988). In his book, *Two Nations*, Andrew Hacker (1992, p. 14) concludes that the U. S. remains either Black or White at the close of the 20th century because the residue of slavery persists: "The fact that blacks are separated more severely than any other group certainly conveys that message."

The four categories—illusion, confusion, selective inclusion, and infusion—position teachers' verbal and nonverbal communications. How teachers think about human diversity, coupled with their taken-for-granted verbal and non-verbal communication patterns, influences their behaviors and classroom practices.

Illusion

Illusion means an erroneous perception of reality. In the United States, the terms "minority" and "majority" are regularly used to differentiate people. Yet such terms confound reality. While it is true that those who are socially classified as White European Americans are members of the ethnic *majority* group (the structurally included group—the assimilated group) in this country, in a global analysis the meanings of majority and minority are virtually the opposite of what they connote in the U. S. Consequently, a confounding illusion is created when humans are socially classified by this system and the damaging effects transcend the operative thoughts and the resulting practices of classroom teachers.

Such is the case with a university professor who, during a meeting, defensively stated, "Multiculturalism is a topic." His statement pertained to his distinction between cultural and multicultural. Then he qualified his point by stating: "There is the 'accepted or acceptable culture' and now we have 'multicultural' which pertains to minorities." This professor condones and passively accepts tunnel-vision Anglo Saxon values and cultural norms as universal. His blurred perception eludes reality and perpetuates marginalization of all other cultural and ethnic groups.

Another illusion example came from teachers enrolled in "foundations of reading" classes at the graduate level. In connection with lectures on language acquisition and development, I have asked my students to do some introspection about language. They then responded in writing to several questions. In three recent semesters, whenever I posed the question, "Do you equate intelligence with 'standard English' fluency?" a third or more of the students have responded yes, and they support their responses with various justifications as to why English fluency should be a measure of intelligence. Yet, when asked, "Do you speak more than one language fluently?" and "Are you literate in a language other than English?" most of the same individuals responding yes to the first question respond no to the second and third questions. Such attitudes about language provide evidence of biased perceptions, as these teachers perceive "standard English" fluency as an indicator of intelligence. Their attitudes and perceptions about language, left unchallenged and unaltered, can have profound negative implications for students speaking some variation of a Black dialect, as well as for students learning English as a second language.

Confusion

This second category means bewilderment or failure to distinguish between things. Confusion results from mistaken identities and premises. It occurs when one is unclear as to who he or she is in relationship to all others. A middle school teacher involved with a state level educational reform committee provided an example of such confusion when she said, "We really don't have any 'ethnics' in our school. Everyone is pretty much the same. There really isn't a need to do much with multiculturalism." This teacher operates in a state of *confusion* because she is unclear as to the meanings of either ethnic or multicultural. All students and teachers come to school with ethnic and cultural identifications, whether those are conscious or unconscious (Banks, 1988, p. 43).

Another teacher-graduate student wrote, "Should our over-taxed citizens bear the burden of financing special classes and additional teachers and textbooks to accommodate students of different cultures? We will be producing a watered down curriculum when what we need to do is spend more money to pay for high technology classes necessary to keep our students competitive in the world market." This teacher also provides an illustration of confusion because her assumption is that "different" means inferior. She is unaware that differentness is not evidence of superiority or inferiority; it simply means that each group has certain gifts and characteristics which others do not possess (Woodson, 1966). She also implies that multicultural education should primarily accommodate those students who are different, rather than educating *all* students to recognize and comprehend the value and beauty of both differences and similarities.

Selective Inclusion

Inclusion means to make part of a whole. Conceptually the idea of inclusion is good, yet semantically and operationally it provides a slippery framework. Mission statements, curriculum and program guides, person-to-person conversations, to name a few, frequently note that the "contributions," the "values," and the "culture" of others should be "included" and "tolerated." Many printed statements now reflect the sophistication of "politically neutralized language." However, the cognitive frameworks for inclusion too frequently continue to marginalize or attach to fringe areas non-Anglo Saxon ethnics. Again, Gloria Anzaldua provides us with wisdom. She clarifies "selective reality" as the narrow spectrum of reality that human beings select or choose to perceive and/or what their culture "selects" for them to see. Thus, racism and internalized oppression result from editing reality: "Whites not naming themselves white presume their universality; an unmarked race is a sign of Racism unaware of itself, a 'blanked-out' Racism" (Anzaldua, 1990, p. xxi).

I submit that the elusive nature of inclusion denotes *selective inclusion* which is manifested in many ways. Selective inclusion discourse attempts to stress amalgamation in which ethnic, racial, and cultural comparisons accentuate the commonalities, likenesses, and "no-differences" of two or more groups. Selective inclusion emphasizes those who have educationally and economically *beat the odds* of discrimination and oppression. These *odds busters* are considered "acceptable minorities" because they do things in ways that are comfortable to a unilaterally integrated society.

Selective inclusion practices condone and perpetuate marginalization and supremacy because its advocates overtly and covertly believe the postures of the White "majority" should determine what "minority" group members must be like in order to be universally accepted—or exploited. This is evidenced by the practices used by large companies to include or exclude people of color in textbook publications, in almost all genres in the popular press, and in "crossover" contemporary music, movies and videos. Selective inclusion is most deceptive when used in determining the respected and recognized "minority" scholars in history, anthropology, literature, philosophy, linguistics, art, music, and natural sciences. They are those whose prevailing thoughts idolize White people as the pinnacles of cultural endowment, correctness and intellectual prowess, and adhere to allegedly exclusive Anglo-Saxon principles as the determinants of acceptability. These prevailing practices become absurd when those proclaiming objective capabilities lack the expertise, insight and life experiences to be competent judges and juries about the validity and legitimacy of the scholarly and artistic works of those who are not Anglo Saxons.

Selective inclusion is embedded in the operational and linguistic frameworks used daily. For example, on June 1, 1993, the CBS evening news featured a report on the LaCrosse, Wisconsin School District busing initiative. The spokesperson made the following statements: "Most of America is not racist. They don't mind living next to Dr. Huxtable, but they do mind living next to Willie Horton." Two simple statements; some academics could spend a great deal of time, energy, and money analyzing the underlying, intervening factors, and controllable variables. The conclusions of the research might identify historical and contemporary semantic referents. The interpretation of the findings might project baseline understandings and suggest future research hypotheses, as well as speculate implications for interpreting similar linguistic statements. For our purposes though, these statements exemplify selective inclusion.

A conversation with a teacher provides another example. This teacher was making arrangements for me to come to his high school to do a couple of multicultural workshops with students, teachers, and invited guests from the district's community. He described the diverse student leadership group within the high school as approximately 25 students, consisting of African American, Native American, Korean and Hispanic students. When I inquired were there any students of European descent? He responded, "Oh, yes, about 10 or 12 of the group are White." This teacher was oblivious of his presumption of White universality, causing him not to identify the European American students as he selectively did the other students, until he had to respond to my question.

A further example of such a pattern of communication occurred when a White high school teacher asked her Black colleague, why Tanya (a Black student) would select Howard University when she could go anywhere she wanted. The White teacher thereby revealed her subliminal negativity about the education Howard could provide; and she implied Tanya would be better off selecting a predominantly White institution.

Selective inclusion is also conspicuously supported by the perpetual renomination of the "canons," "ideologies," and "traditions" of higher education. This is evident in most history textbooks, literature anthologies, and required reading lists across most disciplines. Traditional intellectuals and newly endorsed scholars who comply with "mainstream scholarly ideology" overwhelmingly dominate the content of college courses. "Ethnic scholars" for the most part are confined to courses designated as "ethnic" or "racial" studies. The selective scholarship entrenched in the universities is passed on through the core curriculum textbooks used in elementary and secondary schools.

Infusion

Infusion means to instill, and is the most complex category in analyses of how socialization and education perspectives influence teachers' practices. Multicultural literacy curriculum infusion, an educational imperative, must entail a meta-awareness of the thinking processes governing actions, a cognitive reservoir of information, a compulsion to care, and a commitment to action. Unfortunately, "multicultural infusion" has become one of those placating buzz words in education; too many people are uncertain as to what it really means and how it happens. Defining infusion relative to school curriculum is complex, and therefore it is helpful to think of infusion as three types: episodic, long-range, and deeply structured.

Episodic infusion primarily addresses a situation, an incident, or an occurrence through either proactive or reactive behaviors. In classrooms, proactive episodic infusion stems from teacher initiative deliberately focused to provide information accurately and multidimensionally. The following fifth-grade American history class oral summary script demonstrates proactive episodic infusion because the teacher recognizes the need to revise information presented in the textbook. The original script below perpetuates the marginalizations and omissions which the revised summary seeks to remedy; the crossed out and italicized words revise the original script.

Original summary:

> It took 125 years in all for the colonies to be founded. It takes time for a new nation to get started in a wilderness. This type of important fact did not happen often in history. Many different kinds of people were in America now. These people were learning to get along with each other and were developing the important ideas of freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Most people came to America looking for a chance to work hard and do their best at jobs of their choice. This is an important part of the American way of life. Most of the original settlers were English, but America soon became home for people from Germany, Holland, France, Ireland, Switzerland, Scotland, and other countries as well. All of these different kinds of people would learn to respect each other and look upon themselves as one people—the people of America.

Revised summary (A working draft):

> It took 125 years in all for the colonies to be founded. It takes time for a new nation to get started in a wilderness. This type of important fact did not happen often in history. Many different kinds of people were in America now. These people were learning to get along with each other and were developing the important ideas of freedom of religion and separation of church and state. *Many* people came to America looking for a chance to work hard and do their best at jobs of their choice. *Others were forcibly brought to this country on slave ships from countries throughout the African continent. More than an incidental note, the first twenty Africans arrived at Jamestown in 1619, one year before the Mayflower.* [T]he original settlers, *the*

> *many nations of Native Americans with varied cultures and over 300 languages, resided on the lands between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans when the colonists began to arrive and create new settlements. Many of the colonists who came by choice* were English, but America soon became home for people from *other European countries such as* Germany, Holland, France, Ireland, Switzerland, and Scotland. *Over time people came from Asian countries such as China and Japan. Additionally, various people who have the Spanish language in common, yet with distinctly unique cultures from such places as Mexico, Puerto Rico, and countries in Central America and South America settled in what is now the U. S.* All of these different kinds of people would *need to* learn to respect each other and look upon themselves as one people—the people of America. This is an important part of the American way of life.

Proactive episodic infusion describes deliberate and sincere initiatives to inform people about celebration days such as Purim, Kwanza, and Cinco de Mayo; or about observances such as Ramadan and Rosh Hashana, to name a few. The descriptions might be offered as they chronologically occur on our calendars. Proactive episodic infusion also occurs through the celebration of ethnic festivals, frequently held in schools or sponsored by community groups, which highlight foods, artifacts, music, dance, and styles of clothes.

Reactive episodic infusion entails voicing a position when something is perceived as intolerable, unacceptable, unconscionable, unjust, or inequitable. In the following example, the teacher demonstrates reactive episodic infusion, possibly because she feels that something unconscionable is going on:

> A teacher/author provides culturally diverse literature for an anthology she is editing in spite of the fact that her publisher's position was that since the language arts series under development was not competing for state adoptions they [the publishers] were really not concerned about cultural diversity. Although the publisher ultimately did not use her selections, this was a significant ethical and moral stand for her to take regarding textbooks intended for a broad educational audience.

A second example demonstrates reactive episodic infusion, as a teacher notices an inequity:

> A teacher reading specialist, contracted to prepare vocabulary exercises for an elementary geography series, was awe struck when the publisher's prospectus emphasized people, resources, and the economy for most of the continents and yet listed preservation of wildlife as the only area of emphasis for Africa. While this individual admits he would like to believe that he would have recognized this glaring bias relative to Africa and informed his publisher about it on his own, he is not sure that he would have if his awareness of these issues had not been enhanced during a recent multicultural seminar.

Reactive episodic infusion also occurs when one fails to laugh at a disparaging ethnic joke, articulates disapproval of racist remarks, questions overt discriminatory practices,and challenges bigotry at the moment it occurs. In these situational encounters, either the recipient or an observer reacts to the perpetuator.

Long-range infusion spans time and requires commitment to action which results in enhancement of knowledge bases. James Banks' (1988) four levels of cross-cultural functioning continua are helpful for understanding this type of infusion. The first and fourth levels that he posits are the least effective for long-range infusion because they are extremes of cross-cultural functioning. The first level indicates an individual has a brief and/or superficial understanding of another ethnic culture, and the fourth level indicates total assimilation into a new ethnic culture whereby an individual becomes totally alienated from his or her own culture. Thus, conceptually, individuals who function at levels one and four would be considered less equipped to infuse relevant information. It is Banks' levels two and three of cross-cultural function which supports long-range infusion efforts. At level two, people are beginning to have meaningful cross-cultural contacts and communications with members of other ethnic and cultural groups. At level three, people are thoroughly bicultural in that they are equally comfortable within an adopted culture and their primary culture. Thus, an individual's cross-cultural competency, developing from ongoing meaningful experiences and adaptations to another culture, makes possible long-range infusion of multicultural literacy into the classroom curriculum, even though there will be substantial variability and intensity.

Using a college course as an example, long-range infusion can be said to be underway when multicultural literacy affects the course syllabus, lectures, course activities, and assignments. Pragmatically, long-range infusion is manifested when the professor's class-by-class verbal and non-verbal communications relay respect for self, and an evolving understanding of those outside of his or her primary ethnic and cultural group. Required and recommended readings provide multidimensional scholarship and literature to help students comprehend the diverse perspectives of a given discipline, as well as to help them understand the interconnectedness of multiple disciplines.

When I teach reading foundations courses at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, I feel it is most important that my students acquire multidimensional foundational knowledge about language acquisition and development, and American "standard English." Both Vygotsky (1962) and Piaget (1981), as well as Wadsworth (1971) connected thought and language. Piaget's observations and analyses of children as language users suggested children initially use egocentric speech (primarily speaking in monologues) and socialized speech (speaking to communicate with another). Vygotsky's investigations substantiated that thought is born through language. Bruner (1979) suggested that since language and thought develop concurrently, then language influences children's intellectual development. Donaldson (1978) reminds us that very young children are quite adaptable in that they are capable of understanding others, and thus they are not merely egocentric. Halliday (1977, 1978) emphasized that children acquire language as needed to function in their environment, and this functional language develops in stages.

Without belaboring the point in this discussion, an interactionist theory of language acquisition combines the plausible aspects of language theories relative to: (1) the capabilities of humans to imitate that which is in their environment; (2) the fact that because of their nervous system equipment, humans produce that which they call language; and (3) that the human brain has the cognitive capacities for processing linguistic information. Important concepts, yet they are insufficient since that information is only part of the language foundation integral to literacy pedagogy. Substantial information which is frequently omitted in many linguistic and educational theory and methods courses pertains to the many language influences on contemporary "standard English."

Also, misconceptions and ignorance specifically about Black English (also known as: ebonics, Black communications, Black dialects, to name a few), too frequently pejoratively labeled "substandard" or "non-standard English," are prevalent among the general public, many teachers, and generic critics. Yet research by linguists who have had first hand knowledge of both African and American English languages established the dynamic connections and influences of the vocabularies of West African and Central African languages on American English (Herskovits, [1941] 1958; Turner, [1949] 1973; Vass, 1979; Holloway & Vass, 1993). A cultural context for understanding the systematic linguistic sophistication, semantics, and bidialectal capabilities of many African Americans has been clarified (Smitherman, 1977; Baugh, 1983). Research, classroom teaching experiences, and a synthesis of information on Black English, African origins, and reading processes provide practical underpinnings and knowledge bases teachers can use to provide effective language and literacy instruction (Dandy, 1991).

Dandy's book, *Black Communications*, has been a companion text to a foundations of reading text in one of my preservice teacher education courses. Representative comments about Dandy's book on course exit surveys to which students respond anonymously depict what can be accomplished with students and what remains an enigma to them:

> There were things discussed that I never knew before about Black Communications . . . which is important . . . especially for teachers.
>
> She made sense out of things that hadn't made sense to me.
>
> It seemed to be biased and the author seemed to make excuses for the behavior of African Americans. The author expects all teachers to allow for misbehavior. If the teachers do not, the author considers them insensitive.
>
> It was hard for me to relate because I have no experiences with Black Communications.
>
> Can the book be expanded with more information?

In short, with language experts such as Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner, Donaldson, Halliday, Vass, Smitherman, and Dandy as members of my think tank, a multidimensional language foundation is provided for future teachers. Such understanding has profound implications for facilitating and maximizing students' constructive dynamic interactive processes so essential for effective "learning to read" and "reading to learn" instruction.

Long-range infusion is in progress when effective reading strategies are modeled using literature selections that provide multiple voices. John Steptoe's (1984) short story "Stevie" might be selected to demonstrate a "directed reading thinking activity" (DRTA). An expository/informational passage by Sally Lee, entitled "Buffaloes, Buffaloes Buffaloes" might be used for a demonstration lesson on how to model and guide students to formulate inferences. I may use John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* when demonstrating how appropriate readability formulas are for assessing text difficulty as measured by word and sentence lengths. Moreover it might show how inappropriate they are for assessing the sophisticated conceptual understandings, which might make the book more aesthetically suitable for older students. *The Journey* by Sheila Hamanaka might be selected for a "directed listening thinking activity" (DLTA) to emphasize the use and power of prediction and a group's collective wisdom. Jane Yolen's short story, "No Bath Tonight," might be the stimulus for conducting a "language experience activity" (LEA). "Children of the Amistad," a nonfiction passage by Ellen Mckenzie Lawson could be used to demonstrate a cooperative learning activity, such as writing a group summary.

Thus, the literature selections used to facilitate my instruction about effective reading strategies provide culturally and ethnically diverse voices, thereby infusing multiethnic/multicultural literacy into curriculum in a natural normal way. Needless to say, long-range infusion is a substantially different approach than one ch merely focuses on exemplary "selective ethnic es" such as Caesar Chavez or Martin Luther King nd isolated events taken out of context, such as the 53 March on Washington" or "Los Angeles, April 29, 2."

eep structures, the mental scripts resulting from the l sum of one's life experiences, automatically influ- conscious and unconscious behaviors. At this time, t teachers in our schools and universities reflect t of U. S. American society, in that they have been lcated with beliefs of Eurocentric superiority. This erior ideology has positioned White people as the kespeople of the world's history, the premier lin- sts, the standard setters of beauty, and the curators of arts—even though U. S. ideologies and practices are steriously" saturated with the languages, sciences, , mathematics, and philosophies of non-White ances- groups. Almost all that Anglo Saxons derived from -Anglo Saxon groups they first coveted, then em- ced, then redistributed as originally their own. That ich European-centered people did not want, they d as justifications to denigrate, subordinate, dispar- , and oppress people of color.

eacher, historian and educational psychologist, Asa liard has said many times that no groups other than ive Americans and African Americans, in the history this country, have undergone more defamation of racter through distortion, omission, suppression of rmation, and genocide. The truthful stories of these groups are misaligned in the minds of those edu- d by and inculcated within a country that has legiti- ed White supremacy ideals and racial phobias by oring, destroying and recording history from the wpoint of the conquering colonizers. The residual cts of these atrocities must *really* be understood to olve any of the forms of oppression and discrimina- we face today.

Deep structure infusion requires truthful mental ipts about all geocultural groups. Truthful deep struc- e infusion results from socialization and education cesses which are contextual, holistic, thematic, and ted in the influencing domains derived from multidi- nsional scholarship. We know that White supremacy iefs of elitist mainstream scholars have neglected and torted the histories of most groups of people who are of European ancestry. We also know that, while nges and challenges are well underway and gaining mentum, there is much resistance to humanistically d ethically righting the wrongs created through bi- d scholarship and perpetuated by classical and oper- t conditioning. Murray (1992, p. 55) concluded:

> Today's onslaught against the "culture of diversity" is intended to ensure that, if the curriculum is broadened to include new "voices," as the multiculturalists demand, people will remain divided and ignorant of history, and social reality will be kept at bay. So that any multiculturalism which survives the right-wing offensive is intended to be weak and ineffectual, stripped of its analytic potential and power to mount an effective challenge to the status quo. It will be simply a way of "managing diversity" without recognizing the reality of racism.

CONCLUSION

There is one last personal note which I believe is most appropriate because of the underlying theme of multicultural literacy presented throughout this article. As I recover and uncover information about the legacies of African and African Americans which were denied to me during my formal schooling, I become increasingly passionate about the legacies of the African people and ways to infuse this information into the educational frameworks of what I do as a college teacher, as well as during the socialization encounters with my family, friends, colleagues, and "captive" workshop and conference audiences. I believe all audiences and situations provide opportunities for building a truly multicultural literate "critical mass."

The four categories—illusion, confusion, selective inclusion, and infusion—have been presented as frameworks for thinking about and modifying verbal and nonverbal communications within all aspects of human interactions. It is a useful framework for elementary, secondary, and college teachers who are committed to the goals of multicultural/multiethnic education. Teachers are more culturally complex than they are represented in both classroom effectiveness literature and the "paper curriculum" (the materials, mediums, and the manuals accompanying textbooks which are absolutely essential tools for instruction). When a teacher's own cultural orientation differs from a student's, miscommunication occurs because each one's behavior and thought patterns are grounded in a culturally different symbolic world (Bowers & Flinders, 1990). In the classroom, the mismatch becomes acute if the expectation is that it is only the student who needs to become bicultural because the teacher's socialization and education processes have inculcated her with taken for granted beliefs of preferential human superiority and universality. It is the teacher who must in fact change, and become divergently grounded as the leader of the flock and a model of a truly educated person.

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Outside Looking In: Representations of Gay and Lesbian Experiences in the Young Adult Novel

Nancy St. Clair

I teach a course entitled "Women's Literature/Women's Lives" at a small, midwestern Methodist-affiliated college located in the middle of Iowa. Because the course fulfills one of the students' requirements for a minority-perspective credit, I work to make sure that the literature and lives my students are exposed to are not just white and heterosexual. We regularly spend the last third of the semester reading lesbian literature, beginning with Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, continuing with Adrienne Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality" and ending with Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*.

In spite of the fact that we cover these works towards the end of the semester when attention generally begins to flag, students usually cite this unit as their favorite in their end-of-the-semester evaluations. I expect there are many reasons for this, but two stand out in my mind. For the straight students, the course offers the opportunity to study a culture they are curious about, but which the homophobia, so prevalent in student life, prevents them from freely exploring. My course, then, becomes a mandate to explore that which is taboo for many of them. For lesbian students the unit offers both a validation of their experience and an arena where their voices can be heard.

A reappearing motif in the reading journals of the lesbian students began this project for me. Over and over I would hear both gratitude and appreciation that we were reading texts that spoke to their experience. But along with gratitude, there was sadness that they hadn't encountered such texts earlier in their lives. Comments like these appeared frequently:

I wish I had known about these books when I was younger, maybe junior or senior high would have been easier.

or

When I was a kid, maybe thirteen or fourteen, I spent a lot of time in the library looking, but not sure of what I was looking for. It wasn't like I was a great reader. I read Nancy Drew, but I think I must have wanted *Rubyfruit Jungle*.

My students are predominantly white, from rural backgrounds. Often they are the first generation in their family to attend college and they have chosen Simpson, in part, because it is small, located in the country, and so is "safe" in their minds. But sheltered as they might have been, was it possible that my students had encountered no texts as young adult readers that dealt with homosexuality? This possibility seemed unlikely considering the plethora of available realistic young adult fiction dealing with all other aspects of contemporary life.

A series of questions began to emerge for me. First, just how much realistic young adult fiction was "out there" that examined homosexuality? In answering this question, I wanted to focus on mainstream presses, books likely to be found in school or public libraries and the bookstores most likely to be frequented by adolescents. Second, in the fiction that *was* available, how was homosexuality represented? My questions led me first to Allan A. Cuseo's text *Homosexual Characters in Young Adult Novels: A Literary Analysis 1969-82* (Scarecrow Press, 1992). Written as a doctoral dissertation, Cuseo's book is essentially a survey of how homosexuality appears in a variety of young adult novels. Though the study is long on summary and short on analysis, two important points emerge. One is that in the mid-1960s realistic problem novels for adolescent readers start appearing in great numbers. Cuseo connects this development to a change in language arts courses in high schools. He writes:

> **With the increased emphasis on elective language arts courses and alternative time schedules, schools in their eagerness for relevance, began to experiment with mini-courses and innovative curricula. In that environment young adult fiction became an accepted element. (p. 2)**

But what I find most significant about Cuseo's study is this: though great numbers of realistic young adult novels appeared in the 1960s dealing with subjects such as sex, unplanned pregnancies, abortion, divorce, chemical abuse, and racism, far fewer appeared that explored adolescent homosexuality. Once I knew that adolescents struggling with issues of sexual identity had limited fictional resources to turn to for information, then the representation of gay and lesbian experience in these novels became increasingly important. During the last three years, I've read approximately fifty young adult novels that contain homosexual themes and characters. What I found in these books is that the representation of homosexual experience falls into one of three broad categories.

In the first category are books that depict homosexuality as a "tragic flaw" (Jenkins, p. 89) and that promote a variety of negative stereotypes. Homosexuals are predatory, for example, in Janice Kesselman's *Flick*, immoral in Judith St. George's *Call Me Margo*, doomed to lives of isolation in Isabelle Holland's *The Man Without a Face*, and prone to violence in Larry Hulce's *Just the Right Amount of Wrong*. Adolescent characters who do engage in homosexual behavior in these books are often assured that their behavior is not an orientation, but simply "youthful experimentation" (Jenkins, p. 86) caused by their membership in dysfunctional families, as in Jonathan Donovan's *I'll Get There, It Better Be Worth the Trip*.

Madeleine L'Engle's *The Small Rain* illustrates the tendency of books in this category both to negatively stereotype homosexual characters and to depict homosexuality as a pathological state. Though *The Small Rain* was originally published in 1945, it is worth discussing for a number of reasons. The most significant of these is that I have found very few deviations from L'Engle's depiction of homosexuals in other novels published between 1945 and 1982. Second, L'Engle, as winner of the Newbery Award, is a major name in young adult fiction. Her work is emulated by less well-known authors and frequently cited in scholarship. Third, *The Small Rain* was reissued in 1984 and is still in many school and public libraries. Consequently, the attitudes it embodies continue to be disseminated and absorbed by teenagers who read fiction for information.

Madeleine L'Engle is probably most famous for her Newbery Award-winning *A Wrinkle in Time*. She has written over forty books for children and adolescents. In a field too often dominated by series books (i.e. Nancy Drew, The Babysitters Club, The Sweet Valley Teens), all characterized by a blandness of style and flatness of character, L'Engle's novels stand out, in part, because they are populated by quirky characters, outsiders marginalized by their giftedness and willingness to be critical of the conventional. The most famous of these characters, perhaps, is Meg Murry, the heroine of *A Wrinkle in Time*.

L'Engle wrote *The Small Rain* when she was in her twenties, while working as an actress in New York. In the preface to the 1984 edition, L'Engle describes the book as "very much a first novel" (p. vii), but nowhere in this preface does she exhibit any discomfort with the homophobia in the book. *The Small Rain* covers the life of a talented pianist, Katherine Forrester, from the age of ten to eighteen. It is set "in those years of precarious peace between the First and Second World War..." (p. ix). Katherine is by no means an ordinary child. Like many of the children who populate L'Engle's novels, her extraordinariness is a function of the external circumstances of her life and her talents as a musician. Katherine is the daughter of Julie Forrester, a concert pianist whose career is cut short by a car accident, and Tom Forrester, an internationally renowned composer. After Julie's accident, Katherine is reared by her mother's best friend Manya, herself an internationally acclaimed stage actress. Absorbed by his music, Katherine's father is only able to manage dinner with his daughter once a week. The rest of his free time is spent with Manya, whom he ultimately marries.

In the eight years of her life covered by the novel, Katherine experiences a lot: the death of her mother; the marriage of her father and Manya; travels to and from Europe; becoming a student at a Swiss boarding school; the loss of her virginity; worries about an unwanted pregnancy; becoming engaged, then jilted; and, from the age of fourteen on, the regular drinking of Scotch and the smoking of cigarettes with her parents. (All of this before the age of nineteen and while practicing the piano five hours a day.) What is significant, though, is that nothing Katherine experiences is seen as out-of-the-ordinary for a teenager. On the contrary, her experiences are depicted as very much in keeping with the expected lifestyle of a child of two world-famous artists, artists who not only view themselves as unconventional, but who seem to celebrate that unconventionality.

Because Katherine's upbringing is so unconventional and her attitudes so sophisticated, the reader is not prepared for her reaction to homosexuality when she is taken to a lesbian bar late in the novel:

> **At the bar sat what Katherine thought at first was a man. After a while Sarah nudged her and said, "That's Sighing Susan. She comes here almost every night."**
>
> **Startled Katherine stared at *the creature* again and realized that *it* was indeed a woman, or perhaps once had been a woman. Now *it* wore a man's suit, shirt,and tie; *its* hair was cut short; out of a dead-white face glared a pair of despairing eyes. Feeling Katherine's gaze the creature turned and looked at her, and that look was branded into Katherine's body; it was as though it left a physical mark.... There was a jukebox opposite their table. A fat woman in a silk dress with badly dyed hair put a nickel in it, and as the music came blaring forth, she began to dance with a young blonde girl in slacks. As she danced by their table she smiled suggestively at Katherine. Katherine looked wildly about but saw nothing of comfort.... Pete looked at Katherine and saw her white face, her dark eyes huge and afraid, so he began to very quickly, very gaily, to take her hand and hold it in his.... But Katherine could not laugh with the others. She stood up. "I'm awfully sorry, but I have a headache and I don't feel very well. I think I'd better go home. The air in Washington Square was so fresh and clear that it seemed as though she had forgotten what cold clear air could smell like.... "Let's sit down for a minute," she begged.**
>
> **"You won't catch cold?"**
>
> **"No. I -- I want to get myself cleared out of that air. Then I want to go home and take a bath." (pp. 311-313)**

The above passage is significant for a number of reasons. First, Katherine's horror, her aversion to what she sees, undercuts the realism that L'Engle seems to be striving for in much of the novel. Are we actually expected to believe that Katherine, who has spent much of her childhood in concert halls and backstage at theaters, has never encountered lesbians before? And if we accept that Katherine's response is unrealistic, how do we account for L'Engle's breakdown in characterization?

The answer to this question is evident once we contextualize *The Small Rain*. L'Engle depicts lesbianism as pathological because it confuses Katherine's notions of gender. Note, for example, that in the above passage "Sighing Susan" is three times referred to as "it" and twice as "that creature." Susan's identity rests solely on her identification as a lesbian and as such she is viewed as both less than human and as someone who brings pain not only to herself but to others as well. Susan has "despairing eyes" and Katherine, who feels physically marked by Susan's gaze, feels compelled to retreat to the "clean air."

Limited and facile as L'Engle's depiction might be, it needs to be viewed as part of a literary tradition -- one that can be traced back to Radclyffe Hall and which was alive and well, not only in mainstream literature but in lesbian as well as, for example, in Ann Bannon's novels from the 1950s. We should not be surprised then that L'Engle, who in general seems drawn to young female characters who suffer from their status as outsiders, drew in her first novel upon literary stereotypes. But in 1984 L'Engle published another novel, *A House Like a Lotus*, which also contains lesbian characters. Though not as blatantly homophobic as *The Small Rain*, this later novel still treats homosexuality as a tragic state. The lesbian characters, Max and Ursula, a couple of long standing, are sympathetic, but their lives are depicted in such a way that the prevailing message is that homosexuality is a tragic state for those who are, and a threatening one for those who are exposed to it. This message is repeated in novels like Janice Futcher's *Crush*, Ann Synder's and Louis Pelletier's *The Truth About Alex*, and Ann Rinaldi's *The Good Side of My Heart*.

L'Engle is only one author among many who are reluctant to use their fiction as a tool to explore adolescent homosexuality in a non-judgmental way. Cuseo believes this reluctance stems from an author's awareness that the desires of adolescent readers, publishers, and educators are often in conflict with one another. He writes:

> **Homosexuality, a disconcerting subject for many adults in society, presented a sensitive area for the authors of the adolescent title. The author had to write for the teenager, but the adult controlled what was published and, equally as important, what was reviewed and selected for library and school purchase. This concern is not to be taken lightly as many adolescents although interested in an examination of homosexuality, have been reluctant to purchase these titles or borrow them from libraries. As the adolescent years have traditionally been particularly homophobic, this reluctance is not surprising. Adults have been eager to have the genre moralize, to perform a social service, while the adolescent has been eager for an understanding of society and his/her emerging, if continuing sexuality. (p. 3)**

Publishers often seem motivated by the desire to maximize their profits, and librarians are often restricted by limited acquisitions budgets. Neither of these factors work to support, much less create, an environment in which much literature will be produced that explores homosexuality for adolescents in any meaningful way. Still, the decade beginning with the mid-1970s and running to the mid-1980s saw the publication of a second category of novels, ones in which the representation of adolescent homosexuality became increasingly complex and decreasingly moralistic. In 1976, Rosa Guy published *Ruby*, a significant work for a number of reasons. First, it focuses on the lesbian relationship of two young women of color, one of very few novels to do so. Second, though the relationship between the two girls ultimately ends unhappily, the sexual aspect of their relationship is neither hidden nor accompanied by guilt. And though the relationship does end, it leaves the main character, Ruby, with a renewed sense of self-worth. Sexual identity as something to be explored and come to grips with is a prominent theme in novels in this second category. Novels like David Rees' *In the Tent*, Deborah Hautzig's *Hey Dollface*, Emily Hanlan's *The Wing and the Flame*, and Scott Bunn's *Just Hold On* depict main characters learning not only that their sexual orientation is homosexual, but also what the implications of that identity are. In Rees' novel, for example, the protagonist, Tim, not only comes to accept himself as a gay male but also to accept the fact that his friend, Aaron, will be his friend, though not his lover. Within this second category, Nancy Garden's two novels, *Annie on My Mind* and *Lark in the Morning*, are milestones for several reasons.

First, both were published initially in hardback and by a major press -- ironically by the same press responsible for reissuing *The Small Rain*. Second, the novels are very clearly lesbian novels. The definition of lesbian novel I'm using is that coined by Bonnie Zimmerman in *The Safe Sea of Women: Lesbian Fiction, 1969-89*:

> **A lesbian novel has a central, not marginal lesbian character, one who understands herself to be lesbian. In fact it has many or mostly lesbian characters, it revolves around lesbian history. A lesbian novel also places love between women, including sexual passion, at the center of the story.... Unlike heterosexual feminist literature, which also may be very woman-centered, a lesbian text places men firmly at the margins of the story. (p. 15)**

Garden's *Annie on My Mind* very clearly meets Zimmerman's criteria and just as clearly is written for an adolescent audience. The novel opens with its narrator, Liza Winthrop, a freshman at MIT, in a state of emotional paralysis, haunted by her past and undecided about her future. Her confusion stems from the events of her senior year in high school, the year she met the Annie of the title. The first chapter makes clear that Liza must come to some understanding of the past if she is to have any kind of future. Her inability (or unwillingness) to understand what she has experienced with Annie, and to draw conclusions from it, has left her incapable of doing the academic work she professes to love, i.e., studying to be an architect. Liza's dilemma is clear: in order to develop one component of her identity, she needs to resolve her conflicts about another. Her struggles to understand and accept herself as a lesbian are embodied in her attempts to write a letter to her friend and lover, Annie Kenyon. As she struggles to write a letter and to understand why the writing is so difficult, Liza reviews the events of the past year, including her meeting, falling in love with, and finally being separated from Annie.

Annie on My Mind is a classic coming-out novel and as such is thematically concerned with issues of identity and role. Settings are of great importance in this novel of discovery because they are so thematically aligned with different facets of the girls' relationship. Liza and Annie's first two meetings take place in settings that contain both the past and present and the possibility of easy shifts from fantasy to reality. Liza meets Annie at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and initially mistakes her for an early American colonial girl. Their early exchanges are characterized by lapses into worlds of fantasy and pretense. During their first meeting they engage in mock joustings in the Medieval Hall at the Met. Their second meeting, at the Cloisters, begins with their playing at Knight and Lady. Liza is initially embarrassed by Annie's predilection for play-acting but learns to enjoy it, because it offers her an opportunity to try on other identities and escape from her everyday world, one she describes as "...a bit dull in that nearly everyone is white and most parents have jobs as doctors, lawyers, professors or VIPs in brokerage firms" (p. 16).

Annie and Liza's play-acting has thematic repercussions. It allows the girls space in which to explore their attraction for one another while introducing one of the main challenges they will face as lovers: how to create a space for themselves in a world hostile to their relationship. Though their play-acting creates a space for them, a sanctuary as it were, both girls come to recognize that it can function only as a temporary retreat. Liza realizes that an important shift has occurred in their relationship when she and Annie talk "no pretending this time, no medieval improvisations, just us" (p. 62). Soon after Liza comes to this realization, Annie, too, recognizes that the pleasures of the fantasy world she so ably creates are only temporary. Riding the ferry to Staten Island, she begins an improvisation only to draw back:

> **We're in Richmond," Annie said suddenly, starling me. "We're early settlers and...." Then she stopped and I could feel, rather than see, that she was shaking her head. "No," she said softly. "No, I don't want to do that with you so much any more."**
>
> **"Do what?"**
>
> **"You know. Unicorns. Maidens and knights. Staring at noses, even. I don't want to pretend anymore. You make me want to be real." (p. 76)**

To be real. The rest of *Annie on My Mind* examines what reality is for two young women coming to grips with their sexuality and trying to find models around which to structure their lives.

Allan Cuseo's study ends with 1982 and Nancy Garden's novel was published in 1982 -- a year which is considered by some to have been the peak year for publishing of young adult novels dealing with homosexuality. When I finished reading both works, I reasoned that in the wake of multiculturalism, with its emphasis on diversity in the curriculum, both the treatment of and market for young adult fiction dealing with homosexual themes, issues, and characters might have opened up.

A few years ago I attended the National Council of Teachers of English conference in Seattle. My self-imposed task while there was to find out from publisher's representatives what, if any, titles they had forthcoming dealing with adolescent homosexuality. By the end of two days I had acquired only six titles but did have the dubious pleasure of having embarrassed a variety of publisher's representatives simply by asking my questions. More often than not my queries were met with averted eyes and lowered voices. One representative assured me that her company was seriously interested in AIDS education, but, no, they had no titles available at this time and none planned for the near future. Another representative told me that this was an area that needed to be explored, but again his company had no titles to offer. Only once was my question met with any enthusiasm and that was when I asked it of an author of just such a novel who was delighted to sell it to me for a mere $14.95, signed at no extra charge. I snapped it up, grateful as much for a title (albeit a 1988 one) as to have someone look me directly in the eyes.

Unfortunately, of the titles I found, only *The Arizona Kid* by Ron Korteges contains a major character who is gay, and this character is the main character's uncle. The other novels fit into what I consider a third category, one which, I think, today dominates the market. In this category, gay characters and gay issues are often depicted sympathetically. In Marilyn Levy's *Rumors and Whispers*, for example, the protagonist, Sarah Alexander, has to work through a series of conflicts, ranging from being the new girl in her school to having a teacher with AIDS to having a brother who disrupts her family's fragile peace with the announcement that he is gay. This brother, beset with his own difficulties, still helps Sarah work through her various problems. In Jesse Maguire's *Getting It Right*, the reader encounters a group of teenagers trying to accept the homosexuality of one of their peers. And in Jacqueline Woodson's *The Dear One*, the protagonist, an upper-middle-class young African-American girl, is nurtured by two friends of her mother, a lesbian couple of long standing. Though the positive presentation of homosexual characters and themes in novels for young adults might be viewed as a progress of sorts, it is important to note that in all the above novels the homosexual characters are very much off center stage. As a consequence, the presence of homosexual characters and the issues associated with their lives are of secondary concern in these novels. The implications of this positioning for young gay readers are twofold. First, they learn from reading these books that their issues and concerns are only of secondary importance. And second, they learn what it means to the teenager who is struggling with that identity primarily from the perspective of a heterosexual.

Lest I end this paper on too gloomy a note, I should tell you that at this same NCTE Convention several years ago, I occasionally left the exhibition hall to prowl through bookstores. At these I would again ask for young adult fiction dealing with homosexuality. At one store a woman, who looked amazingly like my mother (that is to say, disapproving) thrust a newly published hardback into my hands. It was *Lark in the Morning* (1991), a new Nancy Garden novel. Supporting Bonnie Zimmerman's contention that lesbian fiction has "gone beyond the coming out novel" (p. 210), Garden's new work combines detective work, adventure, and romance, all of which are engaged in by seventeen-year-old Gillian and her lover, Suzanne. Delighted to have found this book, I said, too loudly apparently, "Great -- do you have any more like these?" The clerk, pursed her lips, glared, and hissed, "No -- isn't that enough?" The answer to her question, of course is, no.

In our culture, one out of ten adolescents struggles with what it means to be homosexual. If we as teachers truly believe that literature helps students understand themselves and the issues they face, then we have an obligation to provide our gay students with the same resources as we do other minority students. Nancy Garden's novels, and Marion Dane Bauer's anthology of short stories, *Am I Blue? Coming Out from the Silence* (HarperCollins), are acknowledgements of this need and responsibility, and are hopeful signs, but they only begin to address a major need.

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First presented at the 1994 ALAN Workshop, Nancy St. Clair's article is a part of a larger project that she is carrying out at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa.

Core Unit 4
Issues of Censorship and Privacy

Censorship of teaching materials in schools has increased in recent years. Much young adult literature deals with topics particularly attractive to censors. Novels have been challenged for such predictable reasons as story lines which deal with sexuality or characterizations which use realistic street language. Other materials have been challenged for a variety of less predictable reasons such as suggesting that young adults might make considered choices which differ from parental or religious authority or sometimes for the introduction of supernatural themes which some readers judge to be in advocacy of Satanism. Still other books have been challenged and censored because they use language or stereotypes which do not reflect current values.

The Internet homepage "Banned Books on Line" posts a collection of news stories which chronicle school censorship (http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Web/People/spok/banned-books.html). The excerpts listed below provide a sense of types of materials which are being censored and the reasons offered for censorship.

Excerpts of Censorship Challenges

From the Associated Press, March 3, 1996: Merrimack, NH schools have pulled Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* from the curriculum after the school board passed a "prohibition of alternative lifestyle instruction" act. (*Twelfth Night* includes a number of romantic entanglements including a young woman who disguises herself as a boy.)

An illustrated edition of *Little Red Riding Hood* was banned in two California school districts in 1989. Following the original *Little Red-Cap* story from *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, the book shows the heroine taking food and wine to her grandmother. The school districts cited concerns about the use of alcohol in the story.

Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* were excluded from the juvenile sections of the Brooklyn Public library (among other libraries), and banned from the library in Concord, MA, home of Henry Thoreau. The File Room summary notes that *Huckleberry Finn* has been dropped from high school reading lists due to alleged racism. In March of 1995, such concerns caused it to be removed from the reading list of 10th grade English classes at National Cathedral School in Washington, DC, according to the *Washington Post*. A New Haven correspondent reports it has been removed from one public school program there as well. Recent objections have often concerned the use of the word "nigger", a word that also got *Uncle Tom's Cabin* challenged in Waukegan, Illinois.

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* was banned from classrooms in Midland, Michigan in 1980, due to its portrayal of the Jewish character Shylock. It has been similarly banned in the past in Buffalo and Manchester, NY. Shakespeare's plays have also often been "cleansed" of crude words and phrases. Thomas Bowdler's efforts in his 1818 *Family Shakespeare* gave rise to the word "bowdlerize".

Bowdlerism still exists today, but nowadays cleaning up sexual references is waning in popularity, and cleaning up racial references is growing in popularity. Case in point: This version of *The Story of Dr. Dolittle*, from the 1960s, was silently "cleaned up" from the 1920 original, in which Polynesia the parrot occasionally used some impolite terms to refer to blacks. In 1988, after the book had fallen from favor enough to have dropped out of print, the publishers issued a new edition that removed nearly all references to race from the book (and cut out a plotline involving Prince Bumpo's desire to become white).

The school library in Oconee County, Georgia, USA removed nine V.C. Andrews novels due to their "filthiness" and John Steinbeck's *Red Pony*, which was challenged due to profanity. The school board voted to evaluate all 40,000 volumes in the system's library and remove any books and teaching materials from the public school that contain "explicit sex and pornography". In Yakima, Washington, USA, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was challenged due to profanity and images of violence and sexuality. It was eventually retained.

The *Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom* provides additional examples of materials being banned for reasons of political incorrectness. For example, The *Autobiography of Malcolm X* was "restricted" at the Jacksonville, Florida, USA middle school libraries because it presents a racist view of white people and is a "how-to manual for crime". *Little House on the Prairie* by Laura Ingalls Wilder was banned in a Sturgis, South Dakota elementary school in 1993 due to statements considered derogatory to Native Americans.

In 1994, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain was challenged in English classes at Taylor County High School in Butler, Georgia, USA because it contains racial slurs, bad grammar and does not reject slavery. Also in 1994, *Tar*

Beach by Faith Ringgold. was challenged in the Spokane, Washington elementary school libraries because it stereotypes African Americans as eating fried chicken and watermelon and drinking beer. The book is based on memories of the author's family rooftop picnics in 1930s Harlem. The book won the 1992 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award for its portrayal of minorities. Racial stereotyping and racial slurs have been used as rationale for censoring Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* , Ernest Gaines' *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* , as well as the works of Rudyard Kipling .

Perhaps the most ludicrous reason given for censoring a book was offered for the banning of *Laugh Lines* published by Grapetree Products. This children's joke book was removed from the McKinleyville, California (USA) Elementary School library in 1990 for its "demeaning" manner toward individuals who read the riddles and cannot figure out the answers.

According to McCarthy (1993), books are challenged and censored for reasons rooted in a wide variety of political and religious stances. The vast majority of challenges, however, come from organized conservative and fundamentalist groups objecting to any material which presents the supernatural, challenges parental authority, suggests that decisions should be made using any basis but a literal interpretation of the Christian Bible, and presents lifestyles which differ from a fundamentalist Christian interpretation of the scriptures. A sense of the breadth of these censorship efforts can be gained by examining the materials most often censored in recent years.

Herbert Foerstel's *A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public*

Libraries (1994) lists the books most frequently challenged in schools and public libraries during the early 1990's. A significant portion of these materials are children's and young adult literature. The list of books follows below.

1. *Impressions*, a reading series edited by Jack Booth et al.
2. *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
3. *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
4. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)
5. *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier
6. *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson
7. *Scary Stories in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz
8. *More Scary Stories in the Dark* by Alvin Schwartz
9. The Witches by Roald Dahl
10. *Daddy's Roommate* by Michael Willhoite
11. *Curses, Hexes, and Spells* by Daniel Cohen
12. *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle
13. *How to Eat Fried Worms* by Thomas Rockwell
14. *Blubber* by Judy Blume
15. *Revolting Rhymes* by Roald Dahl
16. *Halloween ABC* by Eve Merriam
17. *A Day No Pigs Would Die* by Robert Peck
18. *Heather Has Two Mommies* by Leslea Newman
19. *Christine* by Stephen King
20. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
21. *Fallen Angels* by Walter Myers
22. *The New Teenage Body Book* by Kathy McCoy and Charles Wibbelsman
23. *Little Red Riding Hood* by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
24. *The Headless Cupid* by Zilpha Snyder
25. *Night Chills* by Dean Koontz
26. Lord of the Flies by William Golding
27. *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles
28. *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut
29. *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
30. *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl
31. *The Learning Tree* by Gordon Parks
32. *The Witches of Worm* by Zilpha Snyder
33. *My Brother Sam Is Dead* by James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier
34. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
35. *Cujo* by Stephen King
36. *The Great Gilly Hopkins* by Katherine Paterson

37. *The Figure in the Shadows* by John Bellairs
38. *On My Honor* by Marion Dane Bauer
39. *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak
40. *Grendel* by John Champlin Gardner
41. *I Have to Go* by Robert Munsch
42. *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden
43. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain
44. *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel
45. *My House* by Nikki Giovanni
46. *Then Again, Maybe I Won't* by Judy Blume
47. *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
48. *Witches, Pumpkins, and Grinning Ghosts: The Story of the Halloween Symbols* by Edna Barth
49. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez
50. *Scary Stories 3: More Tales to Chill Your Bones* by Alvin Schwartz

This list is filled with classics and award winning books. There is no way to be totally safe from censorship challenges, especially if one chooses to teach using current literature which is perceived by adolescents to be relevant to their lives. There are more and less productive stances, however, which teachers may take.

Choices for Teachers

Articles contained with this packet provide information and suggestions to help educators be prepared for censorship challenges. McCarthy (1993) provides a detailed sense of how censorship challenges are part of larger political and social movements. She suggests that no materials will be acceptable to all contending groups and that it is better for educators to define reasons for their book choices and to design instruction with options for individual students. School districts with pre-existing guidelines for challenging books, end up removing only half as many materials as districts without such plans. The approach of teachers planning several reading options has the added advantage. An average 10th grade class contains a range of reading abilities from the elementary school level to the college level. To be effective with this wide range of students, teachers ought to provide a variety of materials to address any theme being covered. Some students will be able to read several books while others may only complete the simplest. When several options are available from the outset, it becomes much easier for a teacher to deal with parental discontent about a particular title being required for their child. If the parents try to remove the book from all children, a conflict may still ensue. Choice, however, can help avoid a good deal of censorship conflict while making it possible for teachers to help all students become more proficient readers.

Noll (1994) provides case studies of what happens when teachers cannot avoid censorship battles. She documents one of the more insidious side-effects, teacher self-censorship. Noll's presentation of the experiences and philosophies of several experienced teachers provides a grim sense of the realities of current teaching along with the wisdom of teachers from the field.

Donelson (1993) boldly states that "ignorant and lazy teachers aid and abet censors." He provides tens steps every teacher should take in defining rationale's for their teaching of materials they select, determining what local policies exist in relation to censorship, and developing such policies if they do not yet exist.

By Herbert N. Foerstel *A Reference Guide to Book Censorship in Schools and Public Libraries* Greenwood Press. 1994. cloth. 264 pages.

Assignment Options

1. Read 2-3 of the adolescent/ young adult books from Foerstel's list of most censored books.
    - A. In a few paragraphs per book, describe why you think each novel has been censored so often. Provide concrete examples to support your assertions.
    - B. Assume you were to select one or more of these books to teach. Explain what you might do to limit the liklihood of censorship drawing upon readings from the packet for ideas.

2. Contact a local school district to determine if they have a policy in case someone wishes to challenge teaching materials. Compare the policy to suggestions made in the articles by McCarthy, Noll, and Donelson. Which ideas are included? Which might have been included? What do you think of the policy from the following points of view: 1) teacher, 2) parent, 3) citizen?

3. Survey teachers and find three who have either been directly involved in a censorship challenge or who were close to someone who was involved with such a challenge.
    - A. When you have located three teachers, interview them about their reactions during the challenge and their responses after the challenge. Try to determine what their philosophies are about censorship and about survival as an employed teacher.
    - B. Compare the opinions of the teachers you interviewed with the teachers in the Noll article. Be sure to support statements you make with quotations from the teachers you interviewed.

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Challenges to the Public School Curriculum: New Targets and Strategies

Conservative challenges to materials used in the public schools are no longer limited to isolated attacks against individual books. Ms. McCarthy alerts readers to the powerful tactics now being employed to influence all aspects of the curriculum.

BY MARTHA M. MCCARTHY

EFFORTS to make fundamental changes in public schooling for the 21st century face a number of obstacles.[1] Among the significant threats to these efforts are challenges from conservative citizen groups objecting to particular instructional strategies and materials. Some of the best-known conservative groups are listed in the box on page 59.[2] Challenges by these groups to the public school curriculum are increasing dramatically; according to People for the American Way, the number of reported incidents was 50% higher in 1991-92 than in the previous school year.[3]

The conservative groups' most common complaint is that certain curricular materials or activities advance anti-Christian, anti-American doctrine, often referred to as "secular humanism" or, more recently, "New Age theology." Materials that encourage students to think critically, to examine alternatives, or to clarify values – in other words, to become more active learners – are alleged to represent this anti-theistic belief.[4] The conservative groups contend that secular humanism and New Age theology are characterized by reliance on science and human nature instead of God and the Bible.[5] Humanistic, New Age materials and practices allegedly are founded on such doctrinal cornerstones as mysticism, occultism, globalism, moral relativism, internationalism, and hedonism.[6] "Secular humanism" and "New Age" have become catchall phrases, used by critics – much as "communism" was used in the 1950s and 1960s – to refer to everything that is considered a threat to traditional American values and institutions.[7]

Curriculum challenges are not a new phenomenon. However, recent efforts in this regard are particularly noteworthy, not only because of their increasing frequency, but also because of the shift in targets and the change in strategies used to influence the content of the public school curriculum.

NEW TARGETS

There have been subtle but important changes in the targets of curriculum challenges. Until the late 1970s the targets were usually individual books, such as *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Of Mice and Men*. Those making the charges were often parents acting on their own. While the list of individual books under attack continues to grow, recent protests – often orchestrated by national conservative groups – are more likely to focus on entire textbook series and components of the instructional program.

Currently, the most widely challenged textbook series is the Impressions reading series published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. This 15-volume anthology for elementary grades contains selections by such noted authors as A. A. Milne, Maurice Sendak, and C. S. Lewis. The series, used by school districts in 34 states, embraces the whole-language approach to reading instruction. This approach is grounded in the belief that children learn to read as they learn to speak. Accordingly, the series focuses on reading for meaning, with selections that are believed to be of interest to children in the elementary grades. The conservative groups allege that the selections are depressing, morbid, and violent; invade students' privacy; attack traditional values; and promote Satanism, mysticism, and the occult.[8] Most of the challenges focus on the series' subject matter rather than on its pedagogical approach, but the controversy associated with Impressions may have implications for the future of whole-

> *Recent curriculum challenges are noteworthy for their frequency, new targets, and changed strategies.*

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Courts try to defer to local school boards, whether the boards are defending or restricting the curriculum.

language instruction.

Because of California's influence on the textbook market nationwide, it is not surprising that the conservative groups have focused their attacks on the Impressions series in this state. Two closely aligned groups, Citizens for Excellence in Education (CEE) and the National Association of Christian Educators (NACE), both based in Costa Mesa, have distributed statewide mailings condemning the Impressions series. One letter begins with the following passage: "Before you read this letter, I want to warn you that it contains shocking and graphic quotes from a children's reading series used in classrooms across America. The good news is that God is doing wonderful things through His committed people. . . ."[9] Approximately 100 California school districts have adopted the Impressions series, and the series was challenged in about one-fourth of these districts between 1989 and 1990.[10] One in five of the school districts that have experienced challenges no longer uses the series.

Another recent popular target of the conservative groups is the Lions-Quest drug prevention curriculum, developed by Quest International and the Lions Club International. Lions-Quest consists of programs for elementary grades (Skills for Growing) and middle school students (Skills for Adolescence). A program for high school students (Skills for Living) is currently being revised. The asserted purposes of the programs are to develop character, citizenship, responsibility, and positive social skills.[11] The programs encourage students to make positive commitments to their families and communities and to lead healthy, drug-free lives. The materials emphasize parent involvement and include exercises designed for students to complete at home with their parents. However, the conservative groups allege that the materials teach relative values and encourage students to make their own decisions rather than to rely on parental authority. In a 1992 study of challenges to the curriculum in Indiana, the Lions-Quest program was by far the most popular target of attacks, with 28 school districts reporting challenges to this program within the previous four years.[12]

Also challenged by conservative groups has been the program Tactics for Thinking, developed by Robert Marzano and distributed by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This program is designed to improve students' higher-level thinking skills and their ability to address complex problems. This thinking-skills program has been attacked as undermining Christian values and promoting New Age theology through practices that allegedly include meditation and mental imagery.[13] Such exercises as having children focus all their energy on an object for one minute and then describe their concentration process have been challenged as encouraging students to enter into self-hypnotic trances.[14]

Moreover, many course offerings (e.g., sociology, psychology, health, and biology) as well as instruction pertaining to values clarification, self-esteem, multicultural education,[15] evolution, AIDS education, and global education are being contested as anti-Christian, anti-American, or otherwise inappropriate. Several instructional strategies currently touted in the education literature, such as collaborative learning and thematic instruction, are being challenged because they shift to students some of the responsibility that was formerly lodged with the teacher.[16] Outcome-based education (OBE), a popular reform strategy intended to focus attention on school results in terms of what students actually learn, is being attacked by conservative groups as replacing factual subject matter with subjective learning outcomes.[17] OBE initiatives often emphasize higher-order thinking skills, problem solving, and content integration across subject areas. In states such as Iowa, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania, OBE programs have been modified or dropped because of serious opposition from conservative citizen groups.[18]

These recent challenges to textbook series, pedagogical approaches, and thinking-skills programs call into question some of the basic assumptions of school restructuring initiatives (e.g., that students should examine alternatives critically and take responsibility for their learning). Thus they pose far more serious threats to efforts to improve the public school program than do challenges to individual novels.

INCREASING USE OF GRASSROOTS STRATEGIES

In their efforts to influence the content of the public school curriculum, the conservative groups are using a number of strategies, ranging from litigation to personal persuasion. Recently, these groups have experienced setbacks in their attempts to influence state textbook adoptions.[19] They have also been unsuccessful with their litigation alleging that certain materials unconstitutionally advance an anti-theistic creed.[20] Although courts have upheld school boards' decisions to implement challenged programs, they have also upheld board efforts to *restrict* the curriculum, as long as the boards followed their own adopted procedures and based their decisions on legitimate pedagogical concerns.[21] In short, courts try to defer to local school boards, whether the boards are defending or restricting the curriculum.

Consequently, the conservative groups have focused their recent efforts on influencing school boards. They have attempted to marshal grassroots support and have boasted considerable recent success in rallying communities behind their attacks on particular aspects of the public school program. Often the campaigns are initiated by a few individuals who go door-to-door telling parents that, if they care about their children, they will join the crusade against the targeted materials or activities. When enough support is garnered, pressure is applied to the school board to bar the materials and courses from the curriculum.

As noted above, local attacks on curriculum materials are often orchestrated or at least influenced by national conservative groups. CEE, which has more than a thousand chapters nationwide, has produced "Public School Awareness" kits, which are distributed for $195 and contain materials to use in convincing parents of the "danger" of particular instructional materials. The organization's goal is to have such kits available in all Christian churches across the nation and to establish "Public School Awareness" committees in all communities.

The national conservative groups have also distributed to a wide audience a number of books condemning the allegedly anti-theistic orientation of public school offerings. These include such titles as *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*, by Homer Duncan; *Your Child and the Occult: Like Lambs to the Slaughter*, by Johanna Michaelsen; *Globalism: America's Demise*, by William Bowen, Jr.; and *Dark Secrets of the New Age*, by Texe Marrs. In addition, the national organizations' newsletters alert parents to "warning signs" of the New Age world view, among them such symbols as rainbows and unicorns and such phrases as "human potential" and "impersonal force."[22] These materials are designed to alarm parents and motivate them to take action.

As a result of the conservative groups' increasing numbers and greater identification with the mainstream, they are having a more significant impact on school board elections.[23] CEE has claimed that its chapters helped to elect approximately 2,000 school board members from 1989 to 1991, and the organization's goal was to elect 3,500 members by 1993.[24] Skipp Porteous, president of the Institute for First Amendment Studies, has noted that these well-organized conservative groups can have an impact on school board elections because of general voter apathy: "The fundamentalists are a minority, but they're an active minority. This is where the power is."[25]

CEE and NACE have distributed a book, *How to Elect Christians to Public Office*, in which Robert Simonds asserts, "We need strong school board members who know right from wrong. The Bible, being the only true source on right and wrong, should be the guide of board members. Only godly Christians can truly qualify for this critically important position."[26] Simonds has voiced optimism regarding the Religious Right's potential

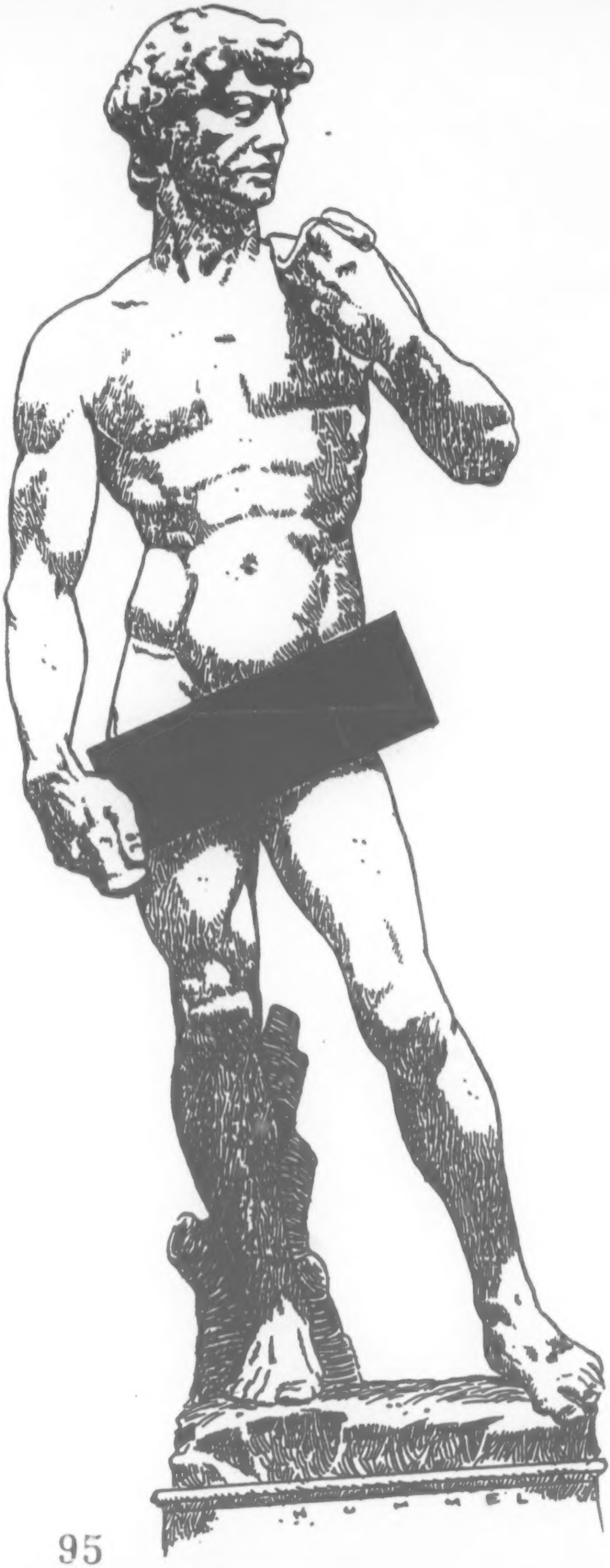

Illustration by Jim Hummel

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to "gain complete control of all local school boards. This would allow us to determine all local policy, select good textbooks, good curriculum programs, superintendents, and principals."[27]

IMPLICATIONS

Without question, challenges to the public school curriculum are more widespread, well-organized, and complex than many educators have realized. Until the latter 1980s educators did not take such challenges very seriously. Those making the challenges were often viewed as the fundamentalist fringe, and courts consistently backed school boards in resisting censorship efforts. However, as noted above, current challenges to entire programs and textbook series are much more serious than isolated attacks on books. And the success rate of those initiating challenges has been rising.[28]

Educators have underestimated the political strength of those challenging the curriculum. Some of the conservative groups, viewing their activities as a divine crusade, sincerely believe that the materials and programs under attack pose a threat to the well-being of children. These groups have been effective in convincing parents that, if they are concerned about their children, they will not let them be exposed to the targeted "harmful" materials. Professional education associations have begun to recognize the magnitude of the challenges, but this professional awareness has come late. Many communities have become mobilized against particular instructional programs and materials, catching educators unprepared. Robert Marzano has asserted that "this movement is very powerful and growing at a geometric rate, and I don't think we realize what we have to lose as educators."[29]

Even if a school board does not remove a challenged program, the controversy itself can disrupt school operations and interfere with implementation of the program. Furthermore, challenges to the curriculum have a ripple effect, a fact that conservative organizations use to their advantage. When materials or programs are attacked in one school district, the controversy often affects other districts, as seen with the spreading challenges to the Impressions reading series in California.[30] Similarly, in the recent Indiana study, most of the reported challenges to the curriculum were geographically clustered.[31]

Moreover, a school board may be reluctant to adopt a specific program that has been challenged in a neighboring district. The board may decide that the educational benefits of the program are not worth the risk of a heated community controversy. Even without school board directives, educators may avoid materials they fear will offend influential conservative parent groups.[32] Such self-censorship by teachers and administrators in public schools is difficult to document because it is simply handled informally and not reported. Henry Reichman has noted:

> Where sound formal policies and procedures are lacking, censorship efforts may quietly succeed. In these types of situations, teachers, librarians, or administrators may accede to pressure without any "incident" being registered. Perhaps more ominously, school personnel may initiate removals on their own, either to deter perceived threats or to impose their own values and orthodoxies on the educational process. In some cases, potentially controversial materials simply are not acquired in the first place.[33]

School personnel need to become more assertive in involving parents in efforts to restructure the instructional program. When innovative materials or strategies are adopted without parental participation, it is not surprising that suspicions are aroused. Educators need to explain to parents the pedagogical justification for programs and materials. If parents become knowledgeable about the rationale for specific programs, they will be less likely to be persuaded by groups that have a "hit list" of materials and programs. Often parents are simply confused and do not understand the educational rationale for the questioned programs.[34] Many have not personally reviewed the materials they are challenging; instead, they rely on information distributed by the national organizations.

When materials are attacked in one school district, the controversy often affects other districts.

Selected Conservative Citizen Groups

American Coalition for Traditional Values (Tim LaHaye)
Christian Coalition (Pat Robertson)
Christian Educators Association (Forrest Turpen)
Citizens for Excellence in Education; National Association of Christian Educators (Robert Simonds)
Concerned Women for America (Beverly LaHaye)
Eagle Forum (Phyllis Schlafly)
Educational Research Analysts (Mel and Norma Gabler)
Family Research Council (Gary Bauer)
Focus on the Family (James Dobson)

School boards often find, when the curriculum is challenged, that they have no procedures in place to handle such complaints. It is imperative for boards to establish a review process *before* a controversy arises. Critics of the curriculum deserve a forum in which to be heard, and some complaints may be valid. Challenges to materials and programs certainly have a "legitimate function in a democratic educational system."[35] But decisions regarding the fate of the challenged materials or programs should be based on educational considerations rather than on emotion, religious zeal, or political expediency. It is too late to establish a process when parents are storming the school with their list of "objectionable" materials. Challenges are twice as likely to be turned back in school districts with explicit procedures for handling curriculum complaints.[36]

Policy makers and educators must recognize that public schools cannot appease all groups. Public schools are not value-free, and the argument that they are value-neutral is destined to fail. For example, if critical thinking is emphasized, that is a value judgment. We must accept

Educators and policy makers need to take a stand that some content, attitudes, and skills shouldn't be compromised.

that, for some groups, any material or strategy that does not promote reliance on Biblical absolutes is offensive. Indeed, trying to convince some fundamentalist groups of the religious neutrality of public schools simply fuels their allegations that Christianity is being denounced, because "neutral" instruction is viewed as anti-Christian.[37]

Instead of arguing that the challenged instructional programs are value-neutral or trying to sanitize the curriculum so that no groups are offended, policy makers and educators need to take a stand that some content (e.g., science), attitudes (e.g., respect for racial diversity), and skills (e.g., critical thinking) should not be compromised. Such instruction is necessary to ensure an educated citizenry in our democratic society, and educators should not have to defend the merits of teaching children how to think or how to get along with others from diverse backgrounds. If policy makers do not take a stand against the mounting threats to the public school curriculum, many school restructuring efforts may be doomed before they get off the ground. And, more significantly, we may produce a generation of citizens who lack the skills necessary to address the vexing dilemmas that will confront our nation in the 21st century.

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1. A range of groups, from civil rights organizations to consumer activists, are condemning various curricular materials for being racist or sexist or for promoting bad health habits for students. And, of course, public schools have not been immune to the current debate over "political correctness." But most of the recent challenges have been mounted by conservative citizen groups. See *Attacks on Freedom to Learn* (Washington, D.C.: People for the American Way, 1992).

2. The conservative citizen groups -- fundamentalist or evangelical Protestant in orientation -- emerged in the 1970s and "coalesced with the political right in the 1980s." For an analysis of this movement, see Richard Pierard, "The New Religious Right and Censorship," *Contemporary Education*, vol. 58, 1987, p. 131.

3. Arthur J. Kropp, press release, People for the American Way, 1 September 1992, p. 3. See also Dianne Hopkins, "Challenges to Materials in Secondary School Library Media Centers: Results of a National Study," *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, vol. 4, 1991, pp. 131-40; and "Schools Face Increased Censorship," *School Board News*, 27 September 1989, p. 4.

4. See Charles Kniker, "Accommodating the Religious Diversity of Public School Students: Putting the 'Carts' Before the Horse," *Religion and Public Education*, vol. 15, 1988, p. 316.

5. See Edward Jenkinson, "Secular Humanism, Elitist Humanoids, and Banned Books," paper presented at the National Education Association Leadership Conference, Washington, D.C., February 1985, p. 5; and Christy Macy and Ricki Seidman, "Attacks on 'Secular Humanism': The Real Threat to Public Education," *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, vol. 23, 1987, p. 77.

6. See Johanna Michaelsen, *Your Child and the Occult: Like Lambs to the Slaughter* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1989).

7. James Wood, "Religious Fundamentalism and the Public Schools," *Religion and Public Education*, vol. 15, 1988, p. 51.

8. See Robert Simonds, *President's Report* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: National Association of Christian Educators/Citizens for Excellence in Education, June 1990), pp. 1-2.

9. Ibid., p. 1.

10. Louise Adler and Kip Tellez, "Curriculum Challenge from the Religious Right: The *Impressions* Reading Series," *Urban Education*, July 1992, pp. 152-73.

11. *Frequently Asked Questions* (Granville, Ohio: Quest International, n.d.); and Sue Keister, Judy Graves, and Dick Kinsley, "Skills for Growing: The Program Structure," *Principal*, vol. 68, 1988, p. 24.

12. See Martha McCarthy and Carol Langdon, *Challenges to the Public School Curriculum in Indiana's Public Schools* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Education Policy Center, 1993).

13. See Debra Viadero, "Christian 'Movement' Seen Trying to Influence Schools," *Education Week*, 15 April 1992, p. 8.

14. Edward Jenkinson, "The New Age of Schoolbook Protest," *Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1988, pp. 66-69.

15. Children of the Rainbow, a multicultural curriculum adopted in the New York City School District, sparked a volatile controversy over the component of the program promoting tolerance toward homosexuals. See Peter Schmidt, "Fernandez Ousted as School Chief in New York City," *Education Week*, 17 February 1993, pp. 1, 14.

16. See Pamela Klein, "New Age Lessons Put Educators, Parents at Odds," *Indianapolis Star*, 3 December 1991, pp. 1, 4.

17. Phyllis Schlafly, "What's Wrong with Outcome-Based Education?," *Phyllis Schlafly Report*, May 1993.

18. Diane Brockett, "Outcome-Based Education Faces Strong Opposition," *School Board News*, 8 June 1993, pp. 1, 6.

19. See Edwin Darden, "Texas Adopts Textbook Lists: Ripple Effect May Be Felt Nationwide," *Education Daily*, 28 November 1988, p. 2; Robert Rothman, "Scientists, Creationists Each Claim Victory in Texas Evolution Vote," *Education Week*, 22 March 1989, pp. 1, 14; and Kent Ashworth, "Texas Board Repeals Rule on Evolution in Textbooks," *Education Daily*, 18 April 1984, p. 3. See also Franklyn Haiman, "School Censors and the Law," *Communication Education*, vol. 36, 1987, p. 337.

20. See *Mozert* v. *Hawkins County Pub. Schools*, 827 F.2d 1058 (6th Cir. 1987), *cert. denied*, 484 U.S. 1066 (1988); *Smith* v. *School Comm'rs of Mobile County*, 827 F.2d 684 (11th Cir. 1987); and *Grove* v. *Mead School Dist. No. 354*, 753 F.2d 1528 (9th Cir. 1985), *cert. denied*, 474 U.S. 826 (1985).

21. See *Virgil* v. *School Bd. of Columbia County*, 862 F.2d 1517 (11th Cir. 1989); and *Zykan* v. *Warsaw Community School Corp.*, 631 F.2d 1300 (7th Cir. 1980).

22. Andrea Prado, "Principals Claim Most Parental 'Impressions' Problems Are Resolved," *Dixon Tribune*, 11 May 1990, p. 3.

23. See Viadero, p. 8. See also Erica Sorohan, "School Leaders Grapple with 'New Age' Accusations," *School Board News*, 1 October 1991, p. 5.

24. Sonia Nazario, "Crusader Vows to Put God Back into Schools Using Local Elections," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 July 1992, pp. A-1, A-5.

25. Quoted in Del Stover, "CEE's Goal: Gain Control of Local School Boards," *School Board News*, 1 September 1992, pp. 1, 5.

26. Robert Simonds, *How to Elect Christians to Public Office* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: National Association of Christian Educators/Citizens for Excellence in Education, 1985).

27. Quoted in J. Charles Park, "The Religious Right and Public Education," *Educational Leadership*, May 1987, p. 9.

28. Kropp, p. 3.

29. Quoted in Viadero, p. 8.

30. See Adler and Tellez, op. cit.

31. McCarthy and Langdon, op. cit.

32. For example, teachers in school districts in Virginia and Oregon refused to air Channel One's student news program the day it included a picture of Michelangelo's *David*, because they feared negative reactions to the statue's nudity. See "Schools Face Disputes Over Religious Issues," *Executive Educator*, November 1991, p. 11.

33. Henry Reichman, *Censorship and Selection* (Chicago and Arlington, Va.: American Library Association and American Association of School Administrators, 1988), p. 13. See also "Censorship Strips Teachers of Faith in Textbooks, Survey Says," *Education Daily*, 3 January 1990, p. 5; and Stacy Kegley and Gene Guerrero, *Censorship in the South -- A Report of Four States 1980-1985* (New York: American Civil Liberties Union, 1985).

34. See William Carson, "The Effective Schools Model: Learning to Listen," *Contemporary Education*, vol. 63, 1992, pp. 128-29.

35. Michelle Marder Kamhi, "Censorship vs. Selection -- Choosing the Books Our Children Shall Read," *Educational Leadership*, December 1981, p. 211.

36. See Reichman, p. 13.

37. Martin McCarthy, "Secular Humanism and Education," *Journal of Law and Education*, vol. 19, 1990, pp. 485-96.

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English Journal [illegible] pp[illegible]

The Ripple Effect of Censorship: Silencing in the Classroom

Elizabeth Noll

> "I constantly self-censor literature and political materials. . . . No complaints have been lodged against me . . . , but the administration in our district has made it apparent that it will not support teachers' legitimate text choices."
>
> —John*, a high school English teacher from Arizona

Although much has been written about censorship in the schools, very little of the professional literature examines teachers' self-censorship. Rather, the research focuses primarily on censorship incidents and court cases (e.g., James Moffett's *Storm in the Mountains* [1988] and Joan DelFattore's *What Johnny Shouldn't Read* [1992]) or offers suggestions regarding selection of books, censorship prevention strategies, and the handling of complaints (e.g., Hunter and Madsen 1993; Weil 1988; West 1983). Reports on challenges to materials and programs appear often in the media and are summarized annually by People for the American Way, a national organization which supports First Amendment rights.

By all accounts, school censorship challenges—defined as efforts to bar materials and methods to all children—are on the rise and are limited to no one geographic region or to a particular level of instruction or area of the curriculum. People for the American Way (1994) documented 395 incidents of censorship in schools across the country in 1992–1993. Forty-one percent of those cases resulted in the removal or restricted use of materials. What the facts and figures in the literature rarely reflect, however, is the "ripple effect" of censorship. How do these often widely publicized incidents of censorship influence classroom teachers and their choices of literature and instructional methods? Does the threat of challenge and conflict—and even dismissal—impel teachers to engage in self-censorship?

That these questions are seldom addressed in any depth in the research on censorship is not surprising. Self-censorship is difficult to document. It is not apt to be reported or even discussed by teachers and may not be the result of fully conscious or intentional decisions. And yet the existence of this silent, but potentially far-reaching, form of censorship should be examined and its implications for teachers and students understood. Giving voice to teachers' concerns about the threat of censorship and understanding how those concerns are played out in the classroom are important steps in addressing the problem of self-censorship.

As a former middle school reading and language arts teacher, I have been concerned for many years about the effects of censorship on the teaching of literature. Last fall I became especially troubled while listening to a group of English teachers in Tucson, Arizona, speak about their fear of censorship. The teachers discussed a recent censorship incident and their subsequent hesitancy to use—or decisions not to use—certain pieces of literature for fear of negative repercussions.

The incident involved a local high school teacher-of-the-year, Carole Marlowe, who had been fired over her use of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *The Shadow Box* by Michael Cristofer. Although Marlowe had received permission from her principal to use the play, one of the district's superintendents later ordered its cancellation because of offensive language and references to homosexuality. She was accused of violating district obscenity standards, and eventually Carole Marlowe was forced to resign. Even though her case did not go to court, it received widespread publicity.

I left that English teachers meeting last fall wondering how teachers elsewhere respond to the threat of censorship. To find out, I solicited written comments from middle school, junior high, and high school English teachers in seven states (Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Vermont). A few of these teachers I already knew or had met, but most were simply names given to me by oth-

A recent survey of high school English teachers in seven states shows censorship of literature—by teachers themselves.

ers. Although their responses are not representative of any one state or region, they do offer a fuller understanding of how the threat of censorship affects teachers and thus influences the schooling experiences of their students.

WHAT IS CENSORED?

Nearly all of the teachers surveyed indicated that they have been questioned, challenged, or censored for their use of certain literature. They also know others who have been similarly treated. While all of the teachers expressed concern about the issue of censorship, those who have been personally involved or have had close ties to incidents were more likely to express uneasiness and even fear about the threat of censorship. While the impact of those experiences on the teaching of literature varied, some teachers avoid challenges by simply offering their students alternative reading choices. Others, however, feel compelled to limit all their students' reading, writing, and discussion options.

In describing their own and others' experiences, the surveyed teachers cite a variety of challenged or censored materials and authors. Novels are by far the most commonly mentioned materials, but films, videos, plays, short stories, journal articles, instructional programs, and school newspapers are listed as well. Among the wide range of titles and authors cited were: *Of Mice and Men, The Chocolate War, Catcher in the Rye, Black Boy, The Crucible, Go Ask Alice, Huckleberry Finn,* Toni Morrison, Shakespeare, Washington Irving, and Voltaire.

The teachers' descriptions of the nature of the incidents and how they were handled were equally varied. A teacher from Colorado, who used *A Day No Pigs Would Die* in her classes, writes that the book was censored, then later placed on a restricted book list. Students are now allowed to read it, but teachers may not use it as a class novel. From South Dakota a teacher writes, "A brouhaha over . . . *Blues for Mister Charlie* . . . resulted in a firmer process for selection of materials as well as a very effective process for defending those selections."

Natalia, a high school teacher in Arizona, describes a complaint taken to the curriculum director by a parent who objected to her use of the book *Helter-Skelter*:

> The parent had not read the book but made the assumption it was the *Helter-Skelter* about the Charles Manson gang. In fact, the book was about two boys who became trapped in a cave while exploring. I was not permitted to know who the parent was. I was told to remove all copies, and my explanation as to what happened was given no credence. I felt the district found me somehow at fault for the incident.

Although some of the incidents originated outside of the school, others were initiated by fellow teachers or administrators. In two situations, newly hired teachers were instructed or strongly cautioned against using certain literature in their classrooms. John, an experienced English teacher from Arizona, notes: "From my first year at [this high school], I was told by my department chair that there were certain texts in our district that we did not teach, including *Slaughterhouse Five* and *Catcher in the Rye*. That set the tone for my career in teaching, and I have been cautious ever since."

Molly, another teacher from Arizona, describes the warning that teachers in her English department give to their less experienced colleagues:

> New teachers and teachers in their first year of conducting a specific class are often advised by more experienced colleagues on what not to choose. Examples include *The Chocolate War* and *Ordinary People*. Certain books, available in class sets from previous years, are no longer used.

From this description, it would be easy to assume that Molly and the other teachers in her department are being unreasonably censorial of one another. And yet, given that a colleague was recently fired over a controversial piece of literature, the cautious behavior of these teachers is understandable. They have become keenly aware of their own precarious positions in the school and recognize that fighting for the right to teach certain literature could cost them their jobs. According to Ken Donelson (1979):

> The teacher faced with censorship may be tempted to fight back, but unhappily, a rapid survey of the experiences of friends in similar straits and the terrifying track record of teachers willing to go to court will often put a damper on the urge to respond to censorship through legal means. (73)

Molly writes that, after the firing of her colleague, "our department discussed what literature we were willing to go on the mat to teach." She herself has decided to no longer use *The Chocolate War* for fear of being censored.

PRESSURE FROM THE RIGHT

Molly and other teachers surveyed view the threat of censorship as coming from fundamentalist religious groups. She comments, "Censorship within my district comes primarily from the Religious Right and from administrators afraid of that Right." Another teacher writes, "I think the censorship thing will get worse. The fundamentalists seem to be lurking everywhere."

The perception of many of the teachers about the growth of censorship from the religious right is supported by research on censorship. DelFattore (1992) notes that "challenges initiated by people who identify themselves as fundamentalists not only outnumber the protests of all other groups combined but also involve far more topics" (4). Research conducted by People for the American Way and reported in *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn* (1993) shows a correlation between an increase in challenges since 1980 and a rise in activism in the schools by far right and religious right groups.

Paul, a teacher who insists that his teaching has not been "cramped by the threat of censorship," nonetheless writes:

> I have hesitated to use certain pieces of literature because of fear of being challenged by . . . fundamentalist Christians, who object . . . to literature that discusses or portrays anything remotely resembling witchcraft, the occult, or what they consider deviant behavior.

Later, he adds:

> It genuinely frightens me . . . that the religious right may get organized enough to take power in my district's school governing board. Their agenda and its practical application, as evidenced by some other . . . districts, are affronts to free thinkers and teachers everywhere.

Natalia, whose choice of literature has been challenged more than once, is also very concerned about the power exerted by conservative religious groups. She writes:

> In the last three years I have had parental complaints that by using Washington Irving's "The Devil and Tom Walker" I was teaching satanism and witchcraft, and that by using Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" I was encouraging teens to be cannibals. I know how easy it is for a complaint to snowball into an incident and how easy it is for a district to fire, blacklist, and decertify any teacher, and I know how underhanded and "behind-closed-doors" these right-wing fundamentalists operate.

"I have had parental complaints that by using Washington Irving's 'The Devil and Tom Walker' I was teaching satanism and witchcraft, and that by using Jonathan Swift's 'A Modest Proposal' I was encouraging teens to be cannibals."

Anne, a middle school teacher from Pennsylvania, offers an opinion from a different perspective. She writes that she has never been censored for her choice of literature, but that, as a Christian, she feels censored by her colleagues:

> There is a political correctness about [my school] which is subtle and unnerving. As a Christian and a promoter of civil rights for everyone, including the unborn, I am uncomfortable expressing my views because my views on abortion are in the minority. There is an unwritten, unspoken censorship of such views. It is inconceivable to my colleagues that any liberated woman in this day and age could be pro-life. Further, religious symbols in the form of pins, necklaces, etc. are frowned upon when worn by the faculty, although the students wear them without embarrassment. This, to me, is a form of censorship.

THE CHILLING EFFECT

Just how does the fear of censorship influence the use of literature and the kinds of opportunities teachers offer their students? Donelson (1979) believes it has a negative effect that "has worked harm, both in chilling the spirits of teachers and students and in placing some books in the deep freeze" (71). His view is supported in the comments of several teachers. For example, when asked whether she has ever hesitated to use certain literature, Natalia responds:

> Always. I cringe annually when I do *The Scarlet Letter, Catcher in the Rye, Great Gatsby, Lord of the Flies,* "Letter from Birmingham Jail," *Othello,* etc. [I] deliberately chose *NOT* to use *The Color Purple* and *Beloved* because of language and concepts. . . . I carefully read everything several times to be sure there is nothing blatantly dangerous (to my job!). I "white-out" certain

> words. I delete names of magazines sometimes when I use an article pertinent to class (e.g., *Playboy*).

John writes that he "carefully edited out the brief glimpses of nudity in Zefferelli's *Romeo and Juliet*" and that two years ago he taught Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* but has since decided not to use it because of the "sexual scenes." He adds:

> Most of the English teachers at my school self-censor materials but have still had complaints, e.g., that witchcraft was being taught with *The Crucible*. I know teachers who have recently stopped teaching *The Chocolate War* and *Black Boy* for fear of their jobs. And we have discussed eliminating *Huck Finn* because of the controversy around it. In fact, most of our teachers are now reluctant to adopt any new texts at all, and this especially hits multicultural literature hard.

Several teachers, though admittedly worried, write that they have made the decision to use certain literature, despite the risk of possible repercussions. Rachel, a teacher from Iowa, comments: "Sometimes I feel queasy thinking about teaching Voltaire's *Candide* because there may be those conservatives who object to [the] subject matter. But I use it anyway. Let them object to the classics!"

Similarly, Kara, who until recently taught in a rural Vermont high school, used to hesitate about showing films such as Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* as well as *Hamlet* and *Lord of the Flies* but "always followed through and decided to do it." She writes: "I was very upfront with my students and told them that if they had a problem with a piece of material . . . I would substitute something for that particular unit."

INVOLVING OTHERS

A significant difference in the teachers' responses to the threat of censorship lies in the extent to which they did or did not involve others—colleagues, administrators, parents, and students—in their decisions. Kara, for example, made it clear to her students that the literature taught in her class was open to negotiation. Furthermore, she actively involved her students in censorship dilemmas. Each year she taught a unit on censorship in which she and her students looked at books, music, and other forms of writing as well as at censorship of students' dress and language.

Like Kara, Martin—a teacher of English and advisor to his New Mexico high school newspaper—has involved his students in issues of censorship. Recently, he received in his mailbox what he calls "vehement objection" to two controversial front-page stories of the newspaper. He shared the unsigned attack with his student staff, "hoping they wouldn't be intimidated into writing mush." In fact, the incident and the discussion Martin initiated with his students created a sense of unity among them and helped them to recognize the importance of "writing well when they pick a controversial topic."

Ellen from South Dakota encourages her students to read, discuss, and write about novels which have been censored elsewhere and to share the books with their parents. When objections to certain literature arise, she discusses the book with the parents and, if necessary, allows their child to make another choice. She writes:

> I'm fortunate to live and work in a community with fairly liberal views about literature. However, I don't take that for granted. . . . I always encourage students to share what they're reading with their parents. I'd rather keep the communication channels open, and even make changes, rather than to allow something to fester to the point of confrontation over censorship. So far—it has worked.

In contrast to Kara, Martin, and Ellen, Gary, who teaches in Colorado, acted alone in his recent decision to restrict his students' reading choices. He writes: "I originally was going to allow my students to choose their own novels for readers workshop. I became concerned when I saw them bringing Stephen King novels. I worried about both parents and my principal objecting to these." Gary played it safe. To avoid problems, he decided to limit his students' reading choices to five novels of which the school already owned multiple copies.

In discussing similar cases of self-censorship, Sharon O'Neal (1990) asks: "[W]hat will be the price tag of such caution? By providing access only to that literature that does not discuss sex, politics, violence, or question the role of the adult, what are we doing to children's minds

(772)?" Several teachers echo O'Neal's concern. Martin comments:

> When people of any age are too afraid of saying, doing, or reading something wrong, the tendency is to . . . withdraw into a frozen state of immobility; then learning dies. Fearful silence . . . would seem to do more harm than any speech or text I can imagine!

And Kara notes:

> My philosophy has always been that ignorance and stupidity, not knowledge, are dangerous. . . . I believe that it is better to discuss very difficult issues with someone supervising than to let students either believe half-truths or know nothing at all. When discussing literature, some tough issues were raised (drug use, incest, drinking, sex, love, violence), but we faced them head on together.

FACING CENSORSHIP HEAD ON TOGETHER

Kara's handling of difficult issues with her students "head on together" has significance for teachers struggling with issues of censorship and self-censorship. For many, the school day is not organized to allow time for meaningful dialogue with colleagues and to support collaboration and a sense of community within departments or across grade levels. Thus, there are few opportunities for teachers to discuss censorship concerns and potential challenges of literature. Feelings of isolation and vulnerability, common to many teachers, become intensified when censorship threatens.

Celeste West (1983) tells teachers facing challenges to "act on the courage of [their] conviction. . . . Many people will rally around you as soon as they really understand their own right to receive ideas is being denied" (1653). Some teachers, like Natalia, have reason to disagree. She writes:

> I'm no longer so idealistic that I'm willing to put my head on the chopping block for principle. I did that once and got my head chopped off while all my supporters stood behind me—way behind, like [in a distant] county.

Carole Marlowe, the teacher of the year mentioned earlier, describes in an essay the despair, paranoia, and divisiveness at her school resulting from the censorship incident in which she was involved. She tells of being criticized by her superintendent in front of the entire school faculty. Carole Marlowe left the faculty meeting with

> friends who walked out with me . . . knowing they would be judged guilty by association. They are also heroes in this story, walking through legitimate fear to support me and a principle they believe in. (6)

The teachers at Marlowe's school were sent a clear message that, in supporting her, they would be opposing the administration. Even when censorship does not originate from within a school, in fact even when no controversy exists, there is pressure for teachers to align themselves with the views of the powers that be. Those who rock the boat or question the status quo are viewed as trouble-makers. Being "good" teachers—like being good students—often means accepting the authority of others, not resisting or challenging it.

"Most of the English teachers at my school self-censor materials but have still had complaints."

It is no coincidence that censored literature is usually that which challenges some "authority" by offering alternative perspectives of reality. Patrick Shannon (1992) discusses "covert censorship" in children's and adolescent literature, the unconscious exclusion of alternative points of view, which

> strips us of our abilities to reason and to act because it makes us behave as if the world is static and that we are powerless to change it. [It] tells us that we can know only what others accept as fact [and] that we should accept our present circumstances. (70)

Teachers who seek out literature which instead explores multiple perspectives provide opportunities for their students to question the status quo. In doing so, these teachers also make themselves vulnerable to criticism and censorship. They become caught in the middle between a desire to teach according to their beliefs on the one hand and pressures to conform and use "safe" literature on the other. Pat, a teacher from Colorado, writes:

> I believe that schools should encourage students to explore and question and challenge ideas. I experience tremendous internal conflict when I feel compelled—by subtle and not-so-subtle messages—to censor what my students read and talk about. As teachers, we never speak about self-censoring, but we need to and we need to make ourselves heard. It's the only way things will change.

OPENING DIALOGUE

Creating opportunities for honest and open dialogue is essential for all of us, at every teaching level, who struggle with censorship and self-censorship. Beginning within our own classrooms and departments, our dialogue needs to expand to include networks of schools and universities, professional associations and unions, local communities, and organizations that support freedom of speech. Our focus must extend beyond specific censorship incidents and examine underlying issues. For example, we might begin by asking ourselves:

- What are our individual and collective responsibilities in advocating our students' intellectual freedom?
- In what ways do we support *and* silence our colleagues' freedom of expression?
- What are our beliefs about the roles and responsibilities of schools as institutions of a democratic society?

Addressing such questions places our individual responses to the threat of censorship in broader, philosophical contexts that support a proactive, rather than a reactive, stance. By coming together in schools and communities across the country in a spirit of openness, trust, and common purpose, we give voice to the conviction that, as Kara says, "ignorance and stupidity, not knowledge, are dangerous." That collective voice empowers us and others—like Natalia and John and Anne—as we all make choices about the literature we will share with our students. In turn, it supports the emerging voices of the students themselves.

**Note:* With the exception of Carole Marlowe, all teachers' names have been changed to protect their privacy.

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EJ TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Talking Right/Talking Wrong

Because people who rarely talk together will talk differently, differences in speech [illegible] to. He [illegible] his identity [illegible] keep him [illegible] who talks [illegible] we do [illegible] The person [illegible] strange [illegible] him [illegible] one purpose of education [illegible]

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THE ALAN REVIEW

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10 STEPS TOWARD THE FREEDOM TO READ

Ken Donelson

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We English teachers and librarians sometimes delude ourselves into assuming that, when we provide a sensible answer for a complicated problem, the problem is resolved. Such is rarely the case, as common sense and experience ought to tell us. That seems particularly true of censorship and our well-meaning efforts to make intellectual freedom a commonplace in secondary schools.

Indeed, the first law of censorship is that anything is potentially censorable to someone, some place, some time, for some reason.

Maybe we do have a right to feel a tiny bit cocky about our public statements against censorship and for the freedom to read. It was, after all, way back in 1939 when the American Library Association (ALA) approved the first version of the "Library Bill of Rights." And if the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) was twenty-three years slower to accept its professional responsibility, the first edition of *The Students' Right to Read* in 1962 helped to make up for its procrastination. Both ALA and NCTE statements suggested specific steps to be taken before and after censors arrived. Both were sensible and clear. Both were gladly adopted by many schools and libraries. And both may have made us complacent about all we had done for the good and noble cause of freedom to read.

Of course, not all schools who had prepared for censorship won all the battles. That was, I suppose, inevitable. The good guys don't win them all, and that makes most of us more willing to prepare for the next battle. What we sometimes forgot was that not all secondary schools were prepared to face the censors. A recent survey of 421 California school districts by Louise Adler (of California State at Fullerton) — autumn 1988 through spring 1990 — found that nearly one-fourth of these school districts lacked formal policies to handle objections to books or other teaching materials. This is especially important for middle schools/junior high to undertake. Their curricula tend to be broader and more integrated. More important, they are schools more likely to include young adult literature, a body of materials much less familiar to school personnel and the community.

The ten steps below are mostly intended for those schools and school districts without clear-cut policies for handling censorship, though it's remotely possible that schools with formal policies in place might want to consider a few changes. I'd like to suggest also that some current procedures in some schools leave out significant steps (e.g., they being with the writing of a library selection policy or they ignore what ought to happen to the book under attack during the attack). Some suggestions may strike educators as impractical or visionary. They ought to consider the suggestions before discarding them.

FIRST, the school board and superintendent should prepare an honest and succinct statement of the school's educational philosophy. The statement should be readable and even worth reading, in other words devoid of jargon, those ugly garbage words and phrases which lack meaning but sound impressive to the uneducated or the easily confused, e.g.,

> **facilitate, meaningful, viable, relevant, change agents, bottom line, coping strategies, interacting, output** (input or any kind of put), **optimize, decision-making, dialoguing, conferencing, interpersonal, parameter** (leave that to the mathematicians), **impact** or **impacted** as a verb, as in "The thrust of his argument **impacted** me" (leave that word to the dentists), **thrust** (as a noun, as in "The **thrust** of his argument impacted me"), **role-model, prioritize, goal-oriented, feedback, on the firing line, actualization** (or that other barbarism, **self actualization**) (or any such psycho-psychotic, socio-sociopathic babble)

The purpose of this one-two page statement (and no one willingly reads more than two pages of educational philosophy) is to make clear what the school stands for and particularly where it stands on *indoctrination* and *education*. Those terms are not synonymous, nor are they compatible, no matter how some strange educators play with language and pretend that the two can exist side by side without damage to a school. *Education* implies the right of students to explore ideas and issues without interference from anyone, parent or teacher or administrator. *Indoctrination* implies the right of those in charge of students to force onto students certain values determined by what purports to be the dominant culture. Deviations from the norm are possible in a system that proposes to educate. Not so in a system that proposes to indoctrinate. Banning books or screening out "dangerous" issues or "controversial" ideas from classroom discussion typifies a school dedicated to indoctrination. And when the rights to inquire and question and even doubt are denied young people, education inevitably degenerates into indoctrination. Parents have a right to assume their kids will get an education, not an indoctrination into someone else's set of values or beliefs.

The brief statement of educational philosophy should make clear what the school proposes to be and to do. Since the statement is clearly not carved out of mosaic stone, it should be periodically examined and revised to take into account new educational ideas and practices and changing social conditions. The statement must reflect the realities of the school, the community, and the world and the educational dreams of the board, the administration, the teachers, and the students.

SECOND, with that statement in place, a series of statements by the several academic departments and the library should be forthcoming. A statement from the English Department need not always be first, but as the department most certain to use controversial books and to consider dangerous ideas and issues, it logically should develop a rationale for studying English, particularly why literature is worth teaching and recommending and reading, maybe even worth enjoying. The rationale ought to announce a well-reasoned excitement about the joys and vitality of literature. It ought to emphasize that there is no one way of getting at any literary work and there are many kinds of literature worth reading. What I'd like to see is beautifully summed by poet and businessman Wallace Stevens. "Literature," he wrote, "is the better part of life. To this it seems inevitably necessary to add, provided life is the better part of literature." Teachers who use young adult literature, and librarians who include it in their acquisitions, need to include the distinctive place of that genre in their curriculum.

Other departments would add their rationales, for example the social sciences and science departments. Certainly, no three departments are so likely to become embroiled in censorship battles as these three — English, social studies, and science.

Once these statements are in place, the school librarian has a sound base for developing a book selection policy. It will reflect the educational, intellectual, and emotional needs of students, the educational dreams of the school board, the administration, the teachers, and the community, and our heritage of freedom to read and inquire and think. Obviously, the school librarian can examine policies of other schools, but, while schools may have much in common, no two are identical. Similarly, no two book selection policies will be identical.

A sound policy will help in fighting censorship, but in any community someone is certain to be disturbed by an author or a book. Indeed, the first law of censorship is that anything is potentially censorable by someone, some place, some time, for some reason. The second law is the more recent the work, the more likely the censorship. And the third law is that no one can guess what authors or books will come under attack next. The perennial *Catch-22* or *Catcher in the Rye* or *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*? Classic targets like *Romeo and Juliet* or *Oedipus Rex* or *Lysistrata*? Surprises like Emily Dickinson's poetry or a short story by Bernard Malamud or William Saroyan? Or no surprises at all — anything by Judy Blume or Norma Klein or John Steinbeck.

Some books challenge us, make us think, make us wonder, make us doubt. That's the danger of reading, just as it's the rationale for reading. And some books will inevitably offend. Dorothy Broderick, formerly a librarian and now editor of *Voice of Youth Advocates*, one of those essential magazines, wrote about a librarian's responsibilities:

> As individuals, we must be willing to unite with others who share our values; as librarians, we must be willing to provide the materials that allow us and our patrons access to ideas we love and ideas we loathe. "This library has something offensive to everyone." (Brodereck, p. 14)

And because the library must protect its carefully selected books and because the several departments must be free to read and discuss ideas and follow them wherever they lead, the school's educators must recommend to the school board a policy and procedure to handle objections or attempted censorship. The most obvious sources for help are the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*, second edition from the ALA and *The Students' Right to Read*, third edition from the NCTE. Both have practical suggestions, and the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work" in the NCTE pamphlet is widely, and deservedly, used.

THIRD, the school board, urged on by the academic departments and library and the administration, should accept the statements above, particularly the policy and procedure on objections to teaching materials. Every year at the beginning of the school year, the board should officially go on record sustaining both policy and procedure again and explaining in the board's minutes why it subscribes, particularly for new members of the board. A school which has no such clear policy or procedure is an accident waiting to happen. Given the change in school board personnel over several years, it is vital that the board reaffirm its approval of the policy and procedure each year.

FOURTH, the school board should go on record reminding the school's educators to accept their disciplines and their professional organizations. Ignorant or lazy teachers aid and abet censors. Good educators take their responsibilities seriously and can — and do — explain to parents why certain books or teaching materials are valuable for an entire class, why other books are appropriate for small groups, and why yet other books are worthwhile for individual students. Parents often know, or can guess, what is going on in school, but they usually are ignorant of why it's going on. Good teachers want parents to know *what*, *why*, and even *how*.

FIFTH, the school board should request that teachers justify their teaching and materials. I'd take that one step further and insist that teachers prepare a rationale of a page or so explaining justifying the use of any long work in class — any class use of a novel or play or book length non-fiction. Such a rationale should be written whether the work is new or old. In fact, I'd be more curious about a justification for *Silas Marner* or *Macbeth* or *A Tale of Two Cities* or any number of literary warhorses than I would a rationale for *A Hero Ain't Nothin' but a Sandwich* or *To Kill a Mockingbird* or *Invisible Man*, though rationales need to be written for all works read in common. I'd wonder why any teacher would want to inflict Eliot's *Four Quartets* or Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* or Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* or Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger* on young adults, but having done even wilder things myself with high school kids, I'd not be antagonistic, only curious. I'd like to read those rationales, partly to learn about the reasoning of challenging English teachers, partly to discover again the simple joy of reading good, clear English prose.

What would I want answered in those rationales? Answers to four questions.

1. **Why would you want to use this work with this class at this time?**
2. **How do you believe this work will meet your announced objectives?**
3. **What problems of style, texture, tone, and theme exist for students in reading this work, and how will you meet those problems?**
4. **Assuming that the objectives are met, how will the class and the students be different for having read and discussed this work?**

In James E. Davis' collection, *Dealing with Censorship*, Diane Shugert's "How to Write a Rationale in Defense of a Book" provides helpful details on the problems of writing rationales. Readers will find further suggested rationales in *this* issue.

While I didn't recognize it at first, one of the best rationales for writing rationales was that they forced teachers to write and have their writing made available to the public. I suspect that most parents would like to know whether their children's teachers can write clear and forceful prose.

SIXTH, after the censor arrives — and it's almost always a surprise — school personnel should remember all they've prepared for this occasion and avoid losing their wits, tempting as it is in moments of crisis. In many schools, censors can count on immediate panic, and they can count on rash promises being made in the midst of chaos. Three points do need to be remembered. The policy and procedure apply to everyone alike, whether it's the school board president or the most shiftless member of the community. The objector, no matter who it is, should be treated tactfully and speedily. And most important, and often forgotten — the fact that someone has questioned a book or an idea does not mean that censorship has arrived. Parents and any citizens have a right to question our teaching materials or methods whenever they wish, and sometimes we may even quietly, or secretly, agree that it's about time Mrs. X or Mr. Y was questioned about the way she/he wastes time doing Task A and/or Task B in senior English or sophomore biology. Challenging a book or debating the virtue of discussing a particular idea does not imply the beginning of the battle between the powers of light (us) and darkness (them), *though it may*. We can't be sure, and that's reason enough to watch carefully.

SEVENTH, the protester must be willing to talk with the offending teacher or librarian before any further steps can be taken. The meeting may not solve the problem, but the parties must have the chance to work matters out on their own. Educators need to remember that if they dread meeting parents, parents may be even more uneasy about facing teachers or librarians. That can translate into parental anger. Parents may assume there's nothing to be gained by a meeting. They may fear teachers, a residue from youth when no one voluntarily met any teacher for any reason. Parents may worry that teachers will look down on them because of their lack of formal education. But it's amazing how often parents interject a comment like one of these early in the discussion — "But that's not what Bob said you wanted" or "I wish she'd told us that you'd given them two weeks to write that paper" or "He said everyone in the class had to read that book." Parents may come to the meeting angry or cowed or humiliated or whatever. It's our best chance for public relations although we may not think of it precisely in those terms. Teachers who use YA literary selections need to prepare for such conferences with great care. Without an abundance of ponderous literary criticism to support their choices, it is the teachers themselves who must offer cogent argument for what they ask their students to read and study.

EIGHTH, if the objector wishes to pursue the matter even after meeting with the teacher or librarian, the parent should be politely told that a form must be completed, preferably one metioned earlier, the "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of a Work" in NCTE's *The Students' Right to Read*. The form asks for some obvious information — the objector's name, whether the person represents her/himself or a group — and brief answers to 14 questions, among them:

1. Have you been able to discuss this work with the teacher or librarian who ordered it or used it?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
4. What do you think is the general purpose of the author in this book?
   ____
   ____
5. In what ways do you think a work of this nature is not suitable for the use the teacher or librarian wishes to carry out?
   ____
10. Do you have negative reviews of this book?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No
12. What would you like your library/school to do about this work?
    ☐ Do not assign/lend it to my child.
    ☐ Return it to the staff selection committee/department for reevaluation.
    ☐ Other – please explain. ________
    ____
13. In its place, what work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of the subject treated? __________
    ____

The form is simple and rapidly completed, and it allows objectors (or censors) to get the bile out of their systems. Sometimes, that's all that's needed — a few nasty words written down, the form wadded up, and the parent can victoriously basketball the form into the nearest wastebasket. The form encourages a cooling-down time. It's one thing to bitch about the schools, the easy and immoral books they use today and not the difficult and immoral classics we read back in the good-olddays when education was run right. That's part of America's love affair with nostalgia. It's a popular American sport beloved of parents and editors and university professors who haven't been near a real classroom in years. Facing that form forces critics to put their objections in specific answers, and that's difficult. Many critics find it impossible.

Please don't misunderstand me. I edited the second edition of the NCTE pamphlet in 1972, and I've had friends compliment me for devising something that got rid of censors, or stalled them. But I don't want to get rid of censors, at least not that way. The "Citizen's Request for Reconsideration" form wasn't created to stall parents, and I hate to see it praised for doing